Spiritual Purification Retreat

Shaykh Ahmad Musā Jibrīl

Adapted from the renowned lecture series
Spiritual Purification Retreat
by Shaykh Ahmad Musā Jibrīl.

Submission to Allāh ﷻ is Prestige, and Humility to Him is Honour. When you feel the earth closing in on you with Trials, seek shelter and Refuge in Humility to Allāh ﷻ, and you will see the Vastness open for you.

~Shaykh Ahmad Jibril

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
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Shaykh Ahmad Musā Jibrīl is strictly against charging for da'wah and firmly holds the view that da'wah should be done solely for the sake of Allāh, without any monetary gain. This condition is a reflection of that principle.

Preface

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad ﷺ, his family, his companions, and all those who follow them with excellence until the Last Day. With the favor of Allah ﷻ alone, it is with deep gratitude that we present an enriched work, compiling the written reminders from Shaykh Ahmad Musā Jibrīl's 1446 *Ramaḍān* video series on *Tazkiyyah*. Based on available transcripts prepared by the Shaykh's students (may Allah reward them), the essence and voice of the Shaykh have been preserved in an accessible format, extending beyond the fleeting moment of a live lecture.

With subtle aesthetic and practical adjustments made solely to enhance coherence in a written form, the result is designed to be read, re-read, and reflected upon in hopes that it guides a sincere servant in their path towards piety.

Any shortcomings in this work should be attributed only to us. May Allah forgive them and reward all of those behind this effort and make it a means of benefit for all who lend an ear and turn towards him.

Editor's Note

All praise is due to the One who brings forth the hidden matters of the heavens and the earth for His servants, and who brought forth the light of the Sunnah as a mighty adversary to triumph over the darkness of disbelief. Glorified is He who dispatched His Messenger ﷺ, a mighty warner, who produced a firm generation whose efforts we now reap. Peace and blessings be upon them all, and upon whosoever follows their path with full belief.

With the favor of Allah ﷻ alone, we gathered over 250 sources for quotes and opinions referenced by the Shaykh. For major Hadith collections, such as Bukhari and Muslim, all footnotes were additionally hyperlinked to a Hadith database for ease of access. Scholarly references were provided with their transliterated names, printing company, volume, and page number. In many cases, more than one print was referenced for a single source as page numbers may vary.

While an earnest effort was made to locate each reference quoted by the Shaykh, there remain about five citations which were not found. Similarly, other references may convey a similar meaning to an intended quote. In both cases, the details were explicitly mentioned in the footnotes. If anyone would like to assist in locating the remaining sources, such help would be greatly appreciated. Any shortcomings are from our negligence, and any good is from the favor of Allah alone.

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Biography of the Author

The Noble Shaykh Ahmad Musā Jibrīl

Birth and Early Years

Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibril was born in the United States in the year 1971, and spent part of his childhood in the city of Madinah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia when his father, Shaykh Musa Jibril, was a student at the Islamic University of Madinah. It was there where Shaykh Ahmad memorized the *Qur'an* at the age of 11. He memorized *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* before graduating from high school. Shaykh Ahmad then spent the rest of his younger years back in the United States graduating from high school in 1989. He later on memorized the chains of Bukhari & Muslim, then memorized the 6 books of Hadeeth. Thereafter, he studied at the Islamic University of Madinah as his father did, and graduated with a degree in the *Shari'ah*.

His Teachers & Study

Shaykh Ahmad had the opportunity to study under many great scholars of our time in Madinah and elsewhere. Not only that but he was able to benefit from his father who was a Shaykh in his own right. Before Ahmad Jibril reached the age of 18, he had read the entirety of *Majmu' al-Fatawa* (37 Volumes) of Ibn Taymiyyah to his father, the books of Ibn al-Qayyim and *al-Muhalla* (11 volumes) of Ibn Hazm.

- Ibn Uthaymeen - he studied several books cover to cover with him and has a rare *Tazkiyyah* from him.
- Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd - he studied some books of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab and Ibn Taymiyyah in private classes with him.
- Shaykh Muhammad Mukhtar Ash-Shinqitee - he studied under him for 4 years.

- *Allamah* Hamoud bin Uqla al-Shu'aybi - who gave Ahmad Jibril a Tazkiyyah.
- Shaykh Ehsan Ellahi Zaheer - who was a classmate of his father. Also when Ahmad Jibril was a teenager, Shaykh Ehsan said about him: 'This boy knows my books more than me.' This was when Shaykh Ehsan was invited to the U.S by Shaykh Musa, and he also said to Shaykh Musa, 'You raised a *Mujaddid* (reviver) insha'Allah'.
- Shaykh Safi ur-Rahman Mubarakpuri the author of the famous book 'The Sealed Nectar' – Shaykh Ahmad studied under him for 5 years.
- Shaykh Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi
- Shaykh Abdullah al-Ghunaymaan
- Shaykh Muhammad Ayub
- Shaykh Atiyyah as-Salim - who was the main student of Muhammad Ameen ash- Shinqitee. He is also the one who completed Shaykh Shinqitee's best and final Tafsir *'Adwa al-Bay'an*. Shaykh Ahmad said that he was very close with this Shaykh.
- Shaykh Ibrahim al-Husayen - who was Shaykh Ibn Baaz's right hand man and trustee for decades.
- Shaykh Abdullah al-Qaud - who was among the early *Ulama'* of Ifta. Shaykh Ahmad made Hajj with him.
- Shaykh Salih al-Husayen - who was the head of the committee for the two holy mosques.
- *Al-Muhaddith* Shaykh Hamad al-Ansari - who gave him a *Tazkiyyah*.
- Shaykh Musa al-Qarni - who is the son in law of Rabi al-Madkhali and one of the best usul teachers.
- Shaykh Muhammad Ma'bad - who gave Ahmad Jibril an *Ijazah* in the Quran.
- Shaykh Abu Malik Muhammad Shaqrah - who was very close to

Shaykh al-Albani, to the extent that Albani asked him to lead his funeral prayer in his will.

- Ibn Baz - he has a *Tazkiyyah* from him (3 months before he passed away) stating that Ahmad Jibril is a Shaykh with good *Aqīdah* (Beliefs) and is well known to him. He also encouraged students in Saudi to benefit from him and his father.
- Safar al-Hawali
- Salman al-Awdah - Shaykh Ahmad was very close to Salman al-Awdah and supported him during his initial imprisonment. After 5 years in prison al-Awdah came out 'rehabilitated' and changed many of his opinions that got him into prison in the first place. Shaykh Ahmad continued to advise him even after this, however when Shaykh Ahmad went through the same trial (prison) he was abandoned, not just by al-Awdah but by even his own students.

The Shaykh has also travelled to other countries such as Egypt and Jordan to study.

He then returned to the United States and finished his JD/LLM (master of law) degree from Michigan law schools – just as he had knowledge and studied the *Shari'ah* of Allah, he studied the *Shari'ah* of the disbelievers in order to be properly equipped to refute it. He now currently resides in Detroit, MI.

Da'wah Efforts

He remained active in *Da'wah* and in touch with his teachers even after his graduation from Madīnah University. For many years, Shaykh Ahmad ran the most visited and most popular Islamic site on the internet, As-Salafyoon, which hosted exclusive content from the world's most renowned '*Ulamā'* of truth and steadfastness, making knowledge that was previously unavailable to many (especially those in the West), easily accessible. After the arrest of the Shaykh and his father in 2002, the government had the website taken down.

Upon his release from prison in 2012, Shaykh Ahmad returned to the *Da'wah* scene with the launch of the world-famous *Tawhīd* classes, expounding on *Al-Usool ath-Thalātha* by Shaykh Al-Islam Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhāb, in a way that had never been done before in the English language. The series quickly gained a reputation as the most influential one recorded on the book to date, reviving the essence of *Tawhīd* among the thousands who followed along with the classes worldwide, by the grace of Allah.

The Shaykh later embarked upon releasing *The Gems of Ramadān* series in 1434 AH, motivating dispirited souls to launch their '*Ibādah* to the next level and revive their efforts in pursuit of Firdaws, with brief but inspirational glimpses into the lives of the *Salaf* and valuable advice for worship extracted therefrom. A more recently released series, in *Ramadān* of 1443, revisits the historical events of *Sulh Al-Hudaybiyyah*, delving into the details of the story to reestablish the honourable nature of the treaty, refuting the defeatist interpretation of it promulgated by the modernists. Also released in 1443, is the *Furū' al-Fiqh* series, in which the Shaykh delivers lectures elucidating on a *Matn* of *Hanbali Fiqh* by Ibn al-Mubrad, in his signature classical and detailed style, unparalleled by any other English *Fiqh* classes released before. Aside from the few mentioned, Shaykh Ahmad Jibrīl has released tens of other lectures and series on several topics. He remained active on social media for many years, releasing articles and posts commenting on current events,

explaining matters of '*Ibādah*, clarifying misconceptions, and refuting deviants and deviations.

Lectures and series by the Shaykh, on various topics and books, continue to be released, extending from Fiqh, to heart softeners, to history, to question and answer sessions. By the will of Allah, Shaykh Ahmad's *Da'wah* content has served, and continues to serve, as a Lantern of *Tawhīd*, countering the darkness of deviation and deception present in the English "*Da'wah*" scene. His *Da'wah* connects east to west, as he delivers classical Islamic knowledge, inherited from scholars with chains extending to the ancient times, to English speaking audiences that had little access to such understanding.

Leaving Sins

One way to resist sins is to rebel against your desires, knowing that the reward is from *Al-Karīm*, the Most Generous, and that it's immense. Reward from Allāh ﷻ for leaving a sin is immeasurable by the mind and it's incomprehensible by the heart. It's on the authority of both Abu Qatādah and Abu Ad-Dahmā', they said

أَتَيْنَا عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَادِيَةِ فَقُلْنَا: هَلْ سَمِعْتَ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ شَيْئًا؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، سَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ: إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَدَعَ شَيْئًا لِلَّهِ إِلَّا بَدَّلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ مَا هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْهُ

We came across a man from the desert and asked him: 'Have you heard anything from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ?' He said: 'Yes, I heard him say: Indeed, you will not leave something for the sake of Allāh except that Allāh will replace it with something better for you.[1]

You'll never leave something for the sake of Allāh ﷻ except that Allāh ﷻ will replace it with something better. It's a consistent rule for those who are truthful with Allāh ﷻ that He always replaces what you leave for His sake with something better. Spend for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and He will reward you abundantly.

...وَمَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِّن شَىْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُۥ...﴿ سَبَأ: ٣٩﴾

...And whatsoever you spend of anything (in Allāh's *Cause), He will replace it... (Saba':39)*

And the Messenger ﷺ said

مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ

[1] Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭ. Al-Risālah, 38/170, Hadith no. 23074

Charity does not diminish wealth.[1]

Allāh ﷻ always replaces and compensates. Whoever suppressed his anger for the sake of Allāh, he forgives someone for the sake of Allāh, one who gives up his pride — he swallows his pride in a matter for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, he will be replaced with something better. What's the replacement? A *Hadīth* says

وما زادَ اللهُ عبْدًا بعفْوٍ إلا عِزًّا

Allāh does not increase a servant in forgiveness except in honour.[2]

Your honour will be increased. You humble yourself for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, you'll receive something better

وما تَواضَعَ أَحَدٌ للهِ إلا رَفَعهُ اللهُ

No one humbles himself for the sake of Allāh except that Allāh raises him in status.[3]

He will higher your status when you humble yourself before Him. When you sacrifice something for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, don't have a narrow-minded, materialistic perspective when considering the rewards and blessings from Allāh ﷻ. The compensation is guaranteed, because it's a promise from Allāh ﷻ, and Allāh ﷻ never breaks his promise. Don't look down on the fact that it may be reserved for you in the *Ākhirah*. It may be *Jannah*!

[1] Sahih Muslim 2588

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِۦ وَنَهَى ٱلنَّفْسَ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ ﴿ ٱلنَّازِعَات: ٤٠﴾

But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination. (an-Nāziʿāt:40)

One who restrains himself from sins, impure, evil desires, and lusts will get a replacement. What's the replacement?

فَإِنَّ ٱلْجَنَّةَ هِىَ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿ ٱلنَّازِعَات: ٤١﴾

Verily, Paradise will be his abode. (an-Nāziʿāt:41)

People of piety and insight do not care about worldly compensation for matters that they leave for the sake of Allāh ﷻ. Their concern is the reward in the *Ākhirah*, because a speck of the Hereafter is better than this world and what's in it. If it's a job you left for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, if it's an engagement you broke off for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, if it's a marriage you ended for the sake of Allāh ﷻ after following the proper, correct, procedure in an attempt to rectify it, if you left a setting that contains *Harām* for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and you moved away from it, if you left a sin in the lonely, dark night for the sake of Allāh ﷻ,

فَإِنَّ ٱلْجَنَّةَ هِىَ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿ ٱلنَّازِعَات: ٤١﴾

Verily, Paradise will be his abode. (an-Nāziʿāt:41)

Remember that. The reward of the *Ākhirah* is what you should seek. What else could you desire if that is truly what you are receiving? Replacement could also be *Jannah* on this earth! What would you want that's better for leaving a sin for the sake of Allāh ﷻ than experiencing the true feelings of the love of Allāh ﷻ and feeling His Love for you, or feeling the sweetness of *Īmān* as a replacement for leaving that sin, or

finding inner peace in Allāh ﷻ and finding satisfaction in Allāh ﷻ? That's a better replacement for the sin that you abandoned. But rest assured, no one will ever abandon something for the sake of Allāh ﷻ except that Allāh ﷻ will replace it with something better in this *Dunyā* as well. He will reward you from ways you may not even realize. In *Sūrat Sād*, in the story of Sulaymān ﷺ,

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُۥدَ سُلَيْمَـٰنَ ۚ نِعْمَ ٱلْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُۥٓ أَوَّابٌ ﴿ ص: ٣٠﴾

And to Dāwūd We gave Sulaymān. An excellent servant, indeed he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allāh]. (Ṣād:30)

إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِٱلْعَشِىِّ ٱلصَّـٰفِنَـٰتُ ٱلْجِيَادُ ﴿ ص: ٣١﴾

When there were displayed before him, in the afternoon, well-trained horses of the highest breed [for Jihād (holy fighting in Allāh's Cause)]. (Ṣād:31)

فَقَالَ إِنِّىٓ أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ ٱلْخَيْرِ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّى حَتَّىٰ تَوَارَتْ بِٱلْحِجَابِ ﴿ ص: ٣٢﴾

He said: "I did love the good (these horses) out of remembrance for my Lord [in my 'Asr prayer]" till the time was over, and (the sun) had hidden in the veil (of night). (Ṣād:32)

Some *Mufassirīn* said in the Tafsīr of these verses that Sulaymān ﷺ was distracted by exercising and parading his horses, preparing them for *Jihād*. He unintentionally missed the evening *Salāh* only realizing it after Maghrib.

﴿رُدُّوهَا عَلَيَّ فَطَفِقَ مَسۡحَۢا بِٱلسُّوقِ وَٱلۡأَعۡنَاقِ﴾ ص: ٣٣

[He said], "Return them to me," and set about striking [their] legs and necks. (Ṣād:33)

As a result of unintentionally missing the *Salāh*, he decided to slaughter the horses that occupied him and to have their meat distributed to the needy. Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Hazm and other *Mufassirīn* had other interpretations of the verses. However, Ibn Al-Qayyim commented on these verses, he said after Sulaymān ﷺ slaughtered the horses because they distracted him, they were the cause of distracting them from the *Salāh*, his recompense was

﴿فَسَخَّرۡنَا لَهُ ٱلرِّيحَ تَجۡرِي بِأَمۡرِهِۦ رُخَآءً حَيۡثُ أَصَابَ﴾ ص: ٣٦

So We subjected to him the wind blowing by his command, gently, wherever he directed. (Ṣād:36)

The reward he received was incomparably superior. Allāh ﷻ placed wind at his service, blowing gently at his command to wherever he pleased.

Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2], a woman tried to seduce the worshipper Jurayj. She tried to get him to commit *Zinā*. He refused. She went to a shepherd and allowed him to commit *Zinā* with her. Then, when she gave birth to the baby boy from the *Zinā* with the shepherd, she alleged that baby boy was from Jurayj. The people went to Jurayj, broke down his sanctuary, pulled him out, and began to abuse him. He made

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 3436

[2] Sahih Muslim 2550

Wudū' and *Salāh*, and then in front of everyone who abused him, he went to the infant — infant! He's not supposed to talk at that age nor is he supposed to comprehend at that age — he went to him, he said, "O boy! Who's your father?" and the infant replied that his father was the shepherd. When the people ﷺ that *Karāmah* from Allāh ﷻ, an infant speaking in his defence, they offered to build him a sanctuary of gold, but he asked that they rebuild it from mud.

Most men would falter in the face of such a temptation. Following the pure *Manhaj* means pure brothers and sisters. Achieving victory for the *Ummah* does not come from the actions of morally corrupt and weak individuals who seek inappropriate private interactions and relationships with sisters, or going behind the Wali's back to communicate with sisters. The downfall, not victory, originates from such people. It takes strong *Īmān* and *Ihsān* and the *Murāqabah* of Allāh ﷻ has to be at an all-time peak to turn away from such sins, but the benefit is enormous. Jurayj had the strength to walk away from such a sin by the will of Allāh ﷻ. He resisted the desire of his *Nafs*, *An-Nafs Al-'Ammārah bi-Sū'* and the *Shaytān* with his temptations, so Allāh ﷻ blessed him with a *Karāmah*. When the *Harām* is close by, and it's easily accessible and it's tempting, remind yourself to abstain for the sake of Allāh ﷻ because the reward is great and significant.

Similar to the story of Jurayj is the story of the three men that everyone knows. Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2], they were blocked in a cave. One of them had a cousin, he seduced her, she refused until he paid her 100 *Dīnārs* that she needed when she fell on hard times. He bought her the amount that he wanted and she allowed him to sleep with her. And the *Hadīth* says that that person said, "When I sat between her legs," — examine that specific detail. That specific detail was outlined in the *Hadīth* to illustrate the level of strength required for one's faith to resist

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 5974

[2] Sahih Muslim 2743

such a sin. He says, "When I sat between her legs..." When he was between her legs, she said, "Fear Allāh and only do it legally." He said, "I got up and left her and left the money with her." After that, possibly a long time after that, he faced a trial in his life. His life was at stake. He was stranded in a cave with no opening.

You're destined to face trials in life. You or your family or children or your loved ones. May Allāh ﷻ protect you from that. Leaving sins for the sake of Allāh ﷻ can serve as a long term investment and be means for Allāh ﷻ to alleviate any hardships that you or your loved ones may face. The man stranded in the cave said, "Ya *Allāh*! If I left her for fear of You, remove the rock!" And Allāh ﷻ saved those three individuals and they left the cave. The point being, he abandoned a sin for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, then he used it as means to ask Allāh ﷻ to avert a disaster, and you can do the same.

When the Messenger ﷺ and the *Sahābah* migrated, they abandoned their homes and their wealth and their lands for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, they departed with the clothes on their backs. What was the replacement? Allāh ﷻ rewarded them by appointing them as the world's leaders and the rulers of the lands. They seized the treasures of Kisrā and Qaysar, the superpowers of their times. Allāh granted them power over the kings and tyrants of their era as well as those who expelled them from their homelands and their territories. That's in addition to what really matters most, which is the reward in the *Ākhirah*.

With Allāh ﷻ's aid and protection, Yūsuf ﷺ resisted the temptation of the wife of the 'Azīz. He did it for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, despite tasting harm as a consequence. He opted for imprisonment over sinning.

قَالَ رَبِّ ٱلسِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِيٓ إِلَيْهِ...﴿ يُوسُف: ٣٣﴾

He said, "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me to..." (Yūsuf:33)

He was patient and he chose what pleases Allāh ﷻ, so Allāh compensated him with the best of compensation. He made him a leader,

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ...﴾ يُوسُف: ٥٦

Thus did We give full authority to Yūsuf (Joseph) in the land... (Yūsuf:56)

He taught him the interpretation — gave him knowledge of the interpretation of dreams and he was selected as a messenger of Allāh ﷻ

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِن تَأْوِيلِ ٱلْأَحَادِيثِ... ﴾ يُوسُف: ٦

And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives [i.e., events or dreams]... (Yūsuf:6)

A generous giver, Allāh ﷻ, and a grateful recipient, Yūsuf ﷺ in many blessed gifts.

Among the returns for leaving something for the sake of Allāh ﷻ is a happy, blessed marriage, which everyone is seeking nowadays. A happy, blessed life, blessed children who raise your ranks to Firdaws. A blessed spouse doesn't come by searching matrimonial sites alone. It starts with your relationship with Allāh ﷻ. It starts by leaving sins for the sake of Allāh ﷻ. The filthy, vile ones who go to matrimonial sites and initiate *Harām* communication and relationships, it's only a matter of time before one calls the Shaykh and begs him to fix the problem in the unblessed marriage or she begs the Shaykh for a *Khul'* or he divorces her. Do you really think the *Harām* one is doing is going to hasten the marriage possibilities or make it a blessed, happy one? You want blessed, obedient kids? It's not by teaching them the *Qur'ān* alone or taking them to school to learn *Tawhīd*, it comes before that! That's part of it, but it comes before that. It starts with the parents' relationships with Allāh ﷻ by leaving the

Harām. Stories help bring the facts that I'm saying closer and they provide evidence to the truthfulness of what I'm saying. Listen to the man that left a pomegranate for the sake of Allāh ﷻ.

Everyone knows 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak. An-Nasā'i said, "We don't know in the era of 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak anyone more noble than him nor do we know anyone equal to him."[1] In Wafayāt Al-A'yān[2], they mention that the father of 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak used to work as a labourer in a garden. One day, the owner of the garden told him, "Bring me a sweet pomegranate." Mubārak, the father of 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak, went to the trees and he bought a pomegranate. When the owner tasted it, it was sour, it wasn't sweet like he requested. The owner got angry and he said, "I asked for a sweet one, why did you bring me a sour one? Go bring me a sweet one." Usually the employees know which trees are sweet and which ones are sour. Mubārak went to another tree and he gave the owner a pomegranate and it turned out to be sour again. That happened three times. Then, the owner asked him why he couldn't bring him a sweet pomegranate. Mubārak replied that he never tasted any of the trees — he never took a fruit and tasted it. It's common that employees pick fruits and eat them while they're working. The owner was amazed and he asked him why he hadn't tasted any of the pomegranates. Mubārak said that he wasn't given permission to eat any of them. This impressed the owner, he was impressed by 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak's father's honesty, and he began to respect him.

He had a daughter; she was proposed to many times. He went to his wife and he said, "I see no one more suitable for this girl than Mubārak." They married their daughter off to Mubārak and 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak was the result. The replacement for the pomegranate that he left for the sake of Allāh ﷻ was a blessed wife, a blessed life, and a son that will be a *Sadaqah Jāriyah* to continue his deeds on until *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah, In shā'* Allāh. Raising the child to be an Imām of his time starts

[1] As-Sunan Al-Kubrā li-Nasāʾī, Ṭ. Al-Risālah, 3/132, Athar No. 2538

[2] Wafayāt Al-Aʿyān, Ṭ. Dār Ṣādir, 3/32

way before marriage. Take it as a rule. When you choose to leave *Harām* for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, you will be rewarded. And on the other hand, if you engage in *Harām*, you will be punished.

It was narrated in At-Tabarāni[1] and Ibn Al-Athīr[2] mentioned it, and Al- Haythami in Majma' Az-Zawā'id[3] mentioned it, that Zayd Ibn Aslam related that Ibn 'Umar wanted to test the shepherd. He passed by a shepherd who was a slave shepherd, and he wanted to test him. He asked that shepherd to sell him one of the sheep. The shepherd said, "I can't sell any of the sheep because the owner is not here, I don't have permission." So Ibn 'Umar ﷺ said, "Sell it, take the money, and just tell the owner that the wolf had eaten it." That honest shepherd raised his head to the sky and he said, "What about *Allāh*?" Ibn 'Umar ﷺ went and bought that slave shepherd from the owner and bought the sheep from the owner. He freed him and gave him all those sheep.

Leaving a sinful sin led to Allāh ﷻ granting him his freedom and wealth on top of that. Those who abstain from sin out of fear of Allāh ﷻ will inevitably find the fruits of their actions in this life. Tasting the sweetness of faith is a fruit of leaving the sin. It could be righteous wife and righteous offspring. It could be an increase in wealth and sustenance. It could be guidance to obedience to Allāh ﷻ and guidance to doing *'Ibādāt*. It could be acceptance Allāh ﷻ places in the hearts of others for you, or peace of mind. You need to initiate abandoning the sins if they come your way for you to get the results. You need to be sincere and truthful with Allāh ﷻ when you leave them. Because whoever is truthful with Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will be truthful with him. The beginning has to come from you, because in the *Hadīth Al-Qudsi*, Allāh ﷻ said,

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[1] Al-Muʿjam Al-Kabīr li-Ṭabarānī, Ṭ. Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 12/263

[2] Asad Al-Ghābah fī Maʿrifat aṣ-Ṣaḥābah, Ṭ. Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 3/492

[3] Majmaʿ az-Zawāʾid wa-Manbaʿ Al-Fawāʾid, Ṭ. Maktabat Al-Qudsī, 9/347

...وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي، أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً

...If he comes to me walking, I'll go to him running.[1]

We'll conclude with this.

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 7405

Give Charity After Committing Sins

Charity encompasses a broad range of subjects, however, we can talk about a specific aspect of it, which is the act of giving charity following one's sins. An individual commits a sin, may Allāh ﷻ distance all of us from it, one should promptly seek to mitigate both the sin and its consequences by giving in charity. Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Al-Mullaqin, and many other *Ulamā'* established that it's a *Sunnah* to give charity after a sin. Al-Jurjāni said,

وَيُسَنُّ التَّصَدُّقُ عَقِبَ كُلِّ مَعْصِيَةٍ

It is recommended to give charity after every sin.[1]

Not only is it a *Sunnah*, but nowadays it's an abandoned, neglected *Sunnah*, and it's a neglected, abandoned *Sunnah* that should be revived.

You should see the sins as your enemy. Sins are an enemy. Sins relentlessly pursue an individual until they lead to that individual's destruction. By giving charity, one can liberate themselves from this enemy and be safe from him by the Will of Allāh ﷻ. By giving in charity after sin, one frees and unshackles himself from the enemy that captured him. It's an established concept in *Islām*, where financial charities are mandated for many specified sins and mistakes that one commits.

For example, among the expiation for the deliberate oath, is to feed 10 Masākīn, to feed 10 poor people. That's a financial compensation. Another is to clothe those 10 people — that's a financial compensation — or to free a slave, another financial compensation. That's just like *Dhihār*. *Dhihār* was a form of divorce in *Jāhilīyyah* where they would declare their wives to be like their mothers. Among the expiations for saying that in *Islām*, if one wants to retract, is to compensate with financial charities, like freeing a slave or feeding 60 poor people. Those are considered financial compensations for those sins. There's plenty of

[1] Mughnī Al-Muḥtāj ilā Maʿrifat Maʿānī Alfāẓ Al-Minhāj, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 4/198

other examples that establish this concept. There are general verses for all types of sins that establish this concept as well.

وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ طَرَفَيِ ٱلنَّهَارِ وَزُلَفًا مِّنَ ٱلَّيۡلِۚ إِنَّ ٱلۡحَسَنَٰتِ يُذۡهِبۡنَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ...﴿ هُود: ١١٤﴾

And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds… (Hūd:114)

Good deeds remove the evil deeds. Similar in meaning is the *Hadīth*

وَأَتْبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا

Follow a bad deed with a good deed and it'll wipe it out.[1]

Al-Bukhāri has a chapter in his book titled[2]:

بَابٌ :الصَّدَقَةُ تُكَفِّرُ الْخَطِيئَةَ

As-Sadaqah (charity) Expiates Sins

In the verse encouraging charity, Allāh ﷻ said,

إِن تُبۡدُواْ ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَۖ وَإِن تُخۡفُوهَا وَتُؤۡتُوهَا ٱلۡفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيۡرٞ لَّكُمۡۚ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم مِّن سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمۡ...﴿ ٱلۡبَقَرَة: ٢٧١﴾

If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and He will remove from you some of your misdeeds [thereby]… (al-Baqarah:271)

The end of the verse is,

[1] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 1987

[2] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṭ. ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm, 2/22

وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم مِّن سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ

The meaning of the ending is Allāh ﷻ will forgive some of your sins through the charity that you give. A person who commits a sin could experience the repercussions of their actions in this *Dunyā*, *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. In Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd[1] and Siyar A'lām An-Nubalā'[2], Ibn Abi Mulaykah narrated that when Asmā'ﷺ, the daughter of the Siddīq ﷺ, when she would have a headache, she used to place her hand on her head and say,

بِذَنْبٍ وَمَا يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ أَكْثَرُ

It's from my sin, and what Allāh *forgave was much more.*

Allāh ﷻ said,

وَمَآ أَصَـٰبَكُم مِّن مُّصِيبَةٍۢ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُواْ عَن كَثِيرٍ ﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ٣٠﴾

And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much. (Ash-Shura-30)

Whatever misfortune befalls you, it's because of what your hands have earned, because of the sin you committed, and He pardons and forgives a lot. There's not a single scratch one gets, nor a twitch of a vein, nor a stumble of a foot, nor any affliction, small or great, that occurs except it's from a sin that one committed.

The misfortune that befalls an individual doesn't necessarily have to be materialistic or physical as many think. A sin creates a dark mark on the heart. That mark and the accumulation of other marks can hinder an

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā, Ṭ. Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 8/198

[2] Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, Ṭ. ar-Risālah, 2/290

individual's ability to engage in *'Ibādah* or to be near to Allāh ﷻ, and that type of effect from the sins is the greatest disaster of all. Being deprived from *'Ibādāt*, being shackled from *Qiyām Al-Layl*, not feeling the sweetness of *Īmān* or the sweetness of the *'Ibādah*, or the sweetness of being near to Allāh ﷻ, or forgetting verses from the *Qur'ān* — that's a great disaster. These are matters that not many see as repercussions for sins. They could be consequences of sins one didn't repent from, just like illnesses, poverty, depression, and hardships are. Ad-Dahhāk said, "We don't know anyone who memorized the *Qur'ān* and then forgot it, except because of a sin." And then he recited the verse,

وَمَآ أَصَـٰبَكُم مِّن مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُواْ عَن كَثِيرٍ ﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ٣٠﴾

And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much. (Ash-Shura-30)

And then he commented and said, "What could be a greater disaster than forgetting the *Qur'ān*?"[1]

How many individuals, both from the past and present, have given charities, and as a result have had casualties and calamities and illnesses alleviated by the Will of Allāh ﷻ? Al-Bayhaqi shared a story about his teacher Abu 'Abdillāh Al-Hākim An-Naysābūri. He's the author of the famous compilation Al-Mustadrak 'Alā As-Sahīhayn. May Allāh ﷻ have mercy on the teacher and on the student. He said that his teacher, Al-Hākim, had some type of disease or sore on his face that he tried to treat with various remedies for an entire year. Nothing worked. So he asked an Imām of his time, Abu 'Uthmān As- Sābūni, "Make *Du'ā* for me after your *Halaqah* on Friday." The Imām made *Du'ā* and the congregation said *Āmīn*. The following Friday, a woman in the gathering handed the

[1] Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Ṭ. Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 7/191

Shaykh a note, and she said in it that she returned last week from making *Du'ā* from Al-Hākim and she continued to make *Du'ā* at her house until she fell asleep. And in her sleep she saw a dream of the Messenger ﷺ telling her to inform Abu 'Abdillāh Al-Hākim that he should give water in charity. Al-Hākim was informed of this, so he ordered the construction of a water cistern at the entrance of his house. Once it was built and filled with water and people began to drink for a week, within that week that the people began to drink from it, Al-Hākim recovered fully from the sores on his face or the disease that he had, his complexion returned to it's best state, and he lived many more healthy years after.[1]

A sinner might face the consequences for a sin in this *Dunyā*, as I said. Quickly giving charity can serve as a shield or relief against the repercussions of that sin. The *Hadīth* in Sunan Ibn Mājah makes this as clear as can be.

الصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْخَطِيئَةَ كَمَا يُطْفِئُ الْمَاءُ النَّارَ

Charity extinguishes sin like water extinguishes fire.[2]

A sin was compared to a fire in this *Hadīth*. Just like this fire will vanish when water is poured over it, similarly a sin and its effect vanish when charity is offered by a believer. Giving a charity yields a reward. That reward counteracts the sin and the consequence of that sin. That reinstates a sense of balance.

So let me summarize the points that we took.

1. First of all, a charity after a sin is forgiveness for that sin *In shā'* Allāh, and that applies to minor sins.
2. It eliminates the effect and repercussions of that sin.
3. It has enormous reward. 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said,

[1] Shuʿab Al-Īmān, Ṭ. Al-Rushd, 5/70; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 3/222

[2] Sunan Ibn Majah 4210

مَا تَصَدَّقَ رَجُلٌ بِصَدَقَةٍ إِلَّا وَقَعَتْ فِي يَدِ اللَّهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقَعَ فِي يَدِ السَّائِلِ

No one donates a charity without it being first received in the hand of Allāh before the hands of the recipient.[1]

And that's supported by a *Hadīth* that's in Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[2] and Muslim[3] pertaining to charities, where it says that Allāh ﷻ takes it in His Right Hand

فَإِنَّ اللهَ يَقْبَلُهَا بِيَمِينِهِ

For indeed, Allāh accepts it with His right hand

4. The fourth point is that a *Sadaqah* after a sin is a deterrent to not commit that sin or other sins in the future. Many parents reprimand their children for inappropriate behaviour in an attempt to prevent its reoccurrence by deducting a small amount of money from their allowance. If you develop a consistent habit of giving charity every time you sin, it can serve as a powerful deterrent against sins. It'll encourage one to pause and reflect before engaging in that sin.
5. A fifth point is that it's a *Sunnah*, as we initially mentioned. It's a *Sunnah* that many individuals are unaware of, and few actively participate in, so by engaging in this *Sunnah*, one also receives the reward associated with reviving a *Sunnah*.
6. And a sixth point that you can add is that a charity after a sin is a form of thanking Allāh ﷻ for repentance. It's a way of saying *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh* that Allāh ﷻ allowed us to repent and accepted our repentance.

[1] Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr fī at-Tafsīr bil-Maʾthūr, Ṭ. Dār Al-Fikr, 4/282

[2] Sahih Al-Bukhari 1410

[3] Sahih Muslim 1014

And the long story of Ka'b Ibn Mālik that's summarized in the *Qur'ān* in Sūrat At-*Tawbah*,

وَعَلَى ٱلثَّلَٰثَةِ ٱلَّذِينَ خُلِّفُواْ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا ضَاقَتۡ عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡأَرۡضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتۡ وَضَاقَتۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ أَنفُسُهُمۡ...﴿ ٱلتَّوۡبَةٰ: ١١٨﴾

And [He also forgave] the three who were left alone [i.e., boycotted, regretting their error] to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite of its vastness and their souls confined [i.e., anguished] them… (at-Tawbah:118)

It's summarized in Sūrat At-*Tawbah* and it's details were related in Sahīh Muslim, by Ka'b Ibn Mālik ﷺ himself. He was among the three who were abandoned by the Messenger ﷺ and the *Sahābah* for approximately 50 days for missing out on the Battle of Tabūk. Our point of that long story is when Ka'b Ibn Mālik ﷺ received the glad tiding of being forgiven after 50 days of agony, he said, "O Prophet of Allāh, part of my repentance is to give up all my wealth in charity for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger." The Messenger ﷺ approved it, but he said "Keep some of your wealth for yourself, for indeed that's better for you."[1] The summary of all this is that one should quickly give to charity after committing a sin. The charity after a sin ward off calamities by the Will of Allāh ﷻ.

In addition to the proofs mentioned, there are so many narratives and stories from both the past and present of individuals that provide supportive, compelling evidence that charity after sins ward off the repercussions, by the Will of Allāh ﷻ. Charities after sins act like a protective shield, serving as a strong fortress against misfortunes that result from sins. I think that's sufficient on this topic, we can talk about another topic *In shā'* Allāh.

[1] Sahih Muslim 2769

The Importance of Sweetness and Delight in Worship

Prior to discussing the methods for achieving sweetness and joy in *'Ibādah*, it's essential to understand what sweetness in *'Ibādah* really is. Sweetness and delight in *'Ibādah* refers to the sense of inner peace when performing an *'Ibādah*. It's the heart's happiness when the Muslim performs an *'Ibādah* — any type of *'Ibādah*! Sweetness and delight in an *'Ibādah* is the sensation of being energized to engage in an *'Ibādah*. It's the desire and feeling to remain immersed in the *'Ibādah* indefinitely. It's longing to prolong, for example, the *Salāh*, whether it's the *Nafl Salāh* or *Fard Salāh* or *Qiyām Al-Layl*. It's the reluctance to set aside the *Mus'haf* once you start reciting it. Sweetness in *'Ibādah* is what some refer to as the *Jannah* of this *Dunyā*. This feeling varies from individual to individual, depending on the strength or weakness of one's *Īmān*. Look at the example of RasūlAllāh ﷺ in *'Ibādah*.

Hudayfah Ibn Al-Yamān ﷺ related[1] that the Messenger ﷺ recited *Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, then *Sūrat An-Nisā'*, and then *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān* in one *Rak'ah*, and it wasn't speed-reading because the *Hadīth* actually specifies that he recited those verses unhurried. On top of reciting those verses and those *Suwar* and those *Ajzā'* with contemplation, on top of all that, whenever he passed verses that referred to the glory of Allāh ﷻ, he glorified Him. If he recited verses about how Allāh ﷻ is to be begged, he would beg Him. When he recited verses dealing with the protection from Allāh ﷻ, he sought Allāh ﷻ's protection. And it wasn't a random night in the Messenger's ﷺ life that he did so. It was a consistent habit throughout his life ﷺ, because there are other narrations like that which are narrated by Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ.[1]

Look at the *Salaf*, the remarkable accounts of the *Salaf* and their acts of worship are extensive! It's inspiring to read about their unwavering commitment to *Salāh*, for example, and the countless, long nights that they devoted to standing in *Salāh* along with the performance of the various other *'Ibādāt*. Mu'adh ﷺ cried on his deathbed, he expressed

[1] Sahih Muslim 772 ,773

sorrow on his deathbed, and that sorrow wasn't about leaving his family or wealth or any *Dunyā* matter. He was crying on his deathbed because he was going to miss standing in *Salāh* during the cold nights, because he was going to miss being thirsty from fasting during the hot days. You have to — you have to feel the sweetness of *'Ibādah* to say something like that in such a predicament. There are similar narrations by Abu Ad-Dardā' and Ibn 'Umar and others ﷺ. Their ability to endure hardships and the long nights that they spent in *'Ibādah* shows that there was something deep within them that motivated them to engage in *'Ibādah* without feeling tired or getting bored.

Al-Fudayl Ibn 'Iyād used to say, "When the sun sets, I feel happy because the darkness gives me a chance to be alone with Allāh, and when dawn breaks I feel sad, because that's when the people start coming back around again."[1] His delight was in spending time alone with Allāh ﷻ, not with people. Most today would say something opposite to what he said. *'Ibādah* got them to forget their worries and their physical discomfort because they felt the sweetness and delight of that *'Ibādah*. The Messenger ﷺ and the men he raised, they found such joy in their *'Ibādah* that it kept them from noticing the pain in their feet even when they became swollen from the strain of standing for so long in *'Ibādah*. They felt comfort in being alone with Allāh ﷻ and happiness in *'Ibādah* that can't be compared to any worldly pleasure or desire. *'Ibādah* brought them a sense of peace and a calm heart. They felt that way because that's the way the Messenger ﷺ raised them.

Nowadays, Muslims are encouraged to perform *'Ibādāt*. Parents, for example, motivate their children to perform *'Ibādāt*. They emphasize the importance of performing the *'Ibādāt* and they emphasize the seriousness of neglecting the *'Ibādāt*. However, they often overlook the necessity of teaching them how to experience the joy and sweetness of *'Ibādāt*. Many Muslims today perform *Salāh* like the pecking of a rooster without feeling

[1] Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm ad-Dīn, Ṭ. Dār Al-Maʿrifah, 1/358

any joy or delight in that *Salāh*. Some are eager to complete the *Salāh* before it actually begins. A lot of people fast or perform the other various *'Ibādāt*, like *Qiyām*, without feeling its sweetness, without feeling connected to it, and without having a bond with it. The Messenger ﷺ didn't raise his *Sahābah* like that. He guided them to establish a connection between the *'Ibādāt* and the heart, prior to the commencement of the physical actions of the *'Ibādāt*. This is the crucial element that we're missing out on today. When the Messenger ﷺ told Bilāl to make '*Iqāmah* for *Salāh*, he didn't just say, "Get up and make '*Iqāmah*." He was instructing him on concepts that went much deeper than the physical *Salāh* itself. In Sunan Abu Dāwūd, the Messenger ﷺ told Bilāl,

يَا بِلَالُ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ أَرِحْنَا بِهَا

Get up and perform 'Iqāmah and give us comfort by it.[1]

أَرِحْنَا بِهَا

Give us comfort by it.

Salāh is comfort. He was teaching him that *Salāh* should be a comfort zone. That's the sweetness and delight of *'Ibādah*. *Salāh* and *'Ibādah* aren't just about the physical movements and the words we utter. He said,

أَرِحْنَا بِهَا

'Ibādāt should also bring peace and comfort to our hearts. They should ease our worries and bring happiness to our souls. That's why when anything distresses a Muslim, he should find his relief in *Salāh* and in the other various *'Ibādāt*. That's the sweetness of *'Ibādah* that we seek to attain. To further deepen this meaning in the hearts of the *Sahābah*, the

[1] Sunan Abi Dawud 4985

Prophet ﷺ instructed them in many, various ways. For example, in Sahīh Muslim he said,

أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ

The nearest a servant is to his Lord is when he's prostrating.[1]

Contemplating that attains one delight in his *'Ibādah*. Some strictly adhere to every single, tiny *Sunnah* of the *Salāh* — that's great, that's how it should be, but then they might miss out on truly experiencing the sweetness of the *Salāh*. The same goes for *Siyām* and the other *'Ibādāt*. It's important to teach how to attain the sweetness of the *'Ibādāt*, like *Salāh*, just as thoroughly as we teach the physical and verbal aspects of those *'Ibādāt*.

Feeling the sweetness of the *'Ibādah* impacts more than just the act of the *'Ibādah*. When someone grows up finding happiness and joy in *'Ibādah*, they're less likely to cross the boundaries of Allāh ﷻ when they're alone. If the *Shaytān* tries to tempt them, they quickly remember Allāh ﷻ and regain their *Īmān*. A generation that's not raised on feeling the sweetness of *'Ibādah* is a weak generation. It's a generation that will easily be swayed by temptations. It's a struggling generation that will get dragged into this materialistic *Dunyā*.

When we raise ourselves and our students and our children to feel the joy of worship, it'll replace and counter the *Shaytān*ic pleasure of sins. A sin may appear to be pleasurable to some. The *Shaytān* and the *Nafs* can create an illusion of enjoyment around sinful acts. A heart that's spiritually troubled may even find some thrill in some of the sins, but when you experience the sweetness of the *'Ibādah*, when you bow down in *Salāh* and feel the closeness to Allāh ﷻ, when you understand Allāh's Love and Kindness, when you realize His Generosity and Mercy, when

[1] Sahih Muslim 482

you grasp all of this, your heart feels the pleasure and sweetness in *'Ibādah* and that increases one's *Īmān*.

Now the consequence of that is that when there's a sinful thought, when the enticing whisper of temptation arises in your mind, or if the opportunity to sin presents itself, you quickly turn to the various types of *'Ibādāt*. Why? Because now, with that proper spiritual upbringing, you now find genuine joy and pleasure in engaging in these *'Ibādāt*. Joy that's exceeding and surpassing the *Shaytān*ic pleasure that's in sins.

Steps to Attain Sweetness in Worship

Now we can talk about how to attain sweetness in *'Ibādah*. The first step is to steer clear of the opposite, which means staying away from sins. Sins act as a wall that prevents you from experiencing the true joy of *'Ibādah*. The greater the sins are, whether they're major or minor sins, the further away you are from savouring the sweetness of *'Ibādāt*. Wuhayb Ibn Al-Ward Al-Makki was a *Tābi'ī*, and he was asked, "Can someone who's sinning experience the sweetness of *'Ibādah*?" He said, "No, merely thinking about sinning will cost one the sweetness in his *'Ibādah*."[1] Keep in mind, sweetness in your *'Ibādah* is something you should experience in this *Dunyā*.

إِنَّ ٱلْأَبْرَارَ لَفِى نَعِيمٍ ﴿ ٱلْإِنْفِطَار : ١٣﴾

Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure. (al-ʾInfiṭār:13)

Allāh ﷻ said the pious, the righteous, will be in joy and in delight. That's not limited to the *Ākhirah*. Ibn Al-Qayyim[2] said, "Don't think

إِنَّ ٱلْأَبْرَارَ لَفِى نَعِيمٍ ﴿ ٱلْإِنْفِطَار : ١٣﴾

Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure. (al-ʾInfiṭār:13)

وَإِنَّ ٱلْفُجَّارَ لَفِى جَحِيمٍ ﴿ ٱلْإِنْفِطَار : ١٤﴾

And indeed, the wicked will be in Hellfire. (al-ʾInfiṭār:14)

only applies to the afterlife." Meaning, that joy is not only the joy and delight of the *Ākhirah*. He said, *"Na'īm"* here refers to the feeling of joy that occurs in all three phases of existence." He means by that that the righteous will enjoy sweetness in this *Dunyā*, the first phase, and in the second phase in the *Barzakh*, the intermediate stage in the grave, and in

[1] Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, Ṭ. Muʾassasat ar-Risālah; 7/199; Ṭ. Dār Al-Ḥadīth, 6/600

[2] Ad-Dāʾ wa-ad-Dawāʾ, Ṭ. ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/184; Ṭ. Dār Al-Maʿrifah, 1/76

the Afterlife. You need to feel that sweetness in this *Dunyā*, and that only comes through *'Ibādah*.

Ibn Taymiyyah stated something very essential about this, and I'm referring to the meaning rather than the direct word for word translation, as I'm not using any notes and I haven't reviewed it in some time. He said, if you don't feel sweetness or joy in your heart when you perform *'Ibādāt*, then you're doing something wrong. Why? Because he said Allāh ﷻ is *Ash-Shakūr*. *Ash-Shakūr* means He is the most appreciative. That means He rewards those who perform *'Ibādāt* with a sense of sweetness in their hearts, and He grants them peace of mind in this *Dunyā*, because He is *Ash-Shakūr*, and that's aside from what they get in the *Ākhirah*. So if you don't feel that way, then something about your *'Ibādah* isn't right. It needs improvements. What one should look into, if they're not feeling this, is the effect of sins on taking away the blessing of sweetness in *'Ibādah*. A poet, and it's supposedly attributed to 'Ali Ibn Abi Tālib ﷺ he said,

إِذَا كُنْتَ فِي نِعْمَةٍ فَارْعَهَا ، فَإِنَّ المَعَاصِي تُزِيلُ النِّعَمْ

If you find yourself in a state of blessing, cherish it, because sins erase those blessings.

وَحَافِظْ عَلَيْهَا بِتَقْوَى الإِلَهِ ، فَإِنَّ الإِلَهَ سَرِيْعُ النِّقَمْ

Protect your Ni'mah and blessing through obedience to Allāh, because He's swift in His retribution.

As a believer in Tawhid, among the biggest *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻon this earth is finding sweetness in your *'Ibādah*. That's a *Ni'mah* that many people fail to recognize as such.

When you talk to a lot of people, they often say things like, "I don't want to sin, because I'm making *Du'ā* for a promotion, and I don't want Allāh ﷻ to turn me down." I don't want to sin because I don't want to

face financial problems, or issues in my marriage, or so Allāh ﷻ can grant me a righteous spouse. Their focus tends to be more on worldly concerns when it comes to the consequences of sins, but the consequences of sins aren't just limited to the physical, visible troubles that you face in your health and in your finances. There's something even more subtle and more impactful. It's when light of *Īmān* fades from the heart, and then it causes one to lose the sweetness of *'Ibādah*. That's truly among the gravest and greatest punishments of sins. The sweetness of *'Ibādah* is among the greatest blessings that Allāh ﷻ bestows upon a believer. Strive to experience this joy, and when you reach that status, hold on to that mighty blessing tightly.

Ibn Al-Jawzi attributed to *Ahbār Bani Isrā'īl*, a scholar or scholars of *Bani Isrā'īl*, that one or some of them said, "O Lord! Ya *Allāh*! How many times do I disobey you without tasting any punishment!" And it was replied to them, "How many times were you punished without you even realizing it!" He was told, "Haven't you been deprived of sweetness in your *'Ibādah*?"[1] That's something overlooked by many. The price of glancing at *Harām* or casually saying a few words of *Harām* can lead to losing the sweetness in one's *'Ibādah*. Sins take out the blessing of the sweetness of *'Ibādah* and wipe it out. The *Salaf* had a different perspective than we do. They believe that one of the worst consequences of sinning was losing out on the sweetness of *'Ibādah*.

Imagine this: It's Maghrib during *Ramadān* and you're super hungry, and a mouth-watering meal is placed right in front of you, but when you take a bite, it has no flavour to it. That's what it feels like to do *'Ibādāt* without any sweetness.

To help you avoid sins, remember how ugly it is to sin, and always remember the negative consequences that they bring. One who sins and is persistent in his sins trades the sweetness and security and comfort that comes along with *'Ibādah* for the discomfort of sins and the fear and harm that come along with sins. Which sane person exchanges comfort,

[1] Ṣayd Al-Khāṭir, Ṭ. Dār Al-Qalam, 1/65

security, and sweetness for fear and harm? You won't experience the sweetness of *'Ibādah* until you create a barrier between yourself and sins. Yahyā Ibn Mu'ādh said, "The heart cannot experience the sweetness of *'Ibādah* when it's burdened with sins."[1] Sins eradicate the sweetness of *'Ibādah*. This entire point and its solution can be summarized by a statement from Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Taymiyyah said, "If a person feels like their heart isn't enjoying the sweetness of *'Ibādah*, they should concentrate on repenting and asking Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness."[2]

Also, to experience the true sweetness of *'Ibādah*, it's important to engage in many, various, additional acts of *'Ibādah*. You can switch the *'Ibādāt* up with various types of *'Ibādāt* to keep *'Ibādah* interesting so you stay motivated and engaged. Sometimes, for example, you focus on *Salāh*. Other times you're focused on fasting, giving charity, making *Du'ā*, seeking knowledge, spreading *Da'wah*, teaching others to recite the *Qur'ān*, and reciting the *Qur'ān*. The more you do of these acts, the more you'll feel the Love of Allāh ﷻ and the sweetness of the *'Ibādah*, by proof from the *Hadīth Al-Qudsi*,

وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْته كُنْت سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا وَلَئِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لَأُعِيذَنَّهُ

And My servant continues to draw near to me with nawafil (supererogatory) deeds until I Love him. When I Love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him.[3]

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[1] Dhamm Al-Hawā, 1/68

[2] Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā, T. Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 11/390

[3] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6502

"My servant continues to draw near to me with *Nawāfil* until I love him." What happens when Allāh loves you? "I'm his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hands with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks." Furthermore, "When he asks Me, I will surely give it to him, and when he seeks refuge with Me, I will grant him refuge." If you seek nearness to Allāh ﷻ through *Nawāfil*, Allāh ﷻ says

حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ

He will love you. When Allāh loves you, He will bring you near to Him. When you are near to Him, you will most definitely taste the ultimate sweetness in your *'Ibādah*.

Another point is, while you do any of the *'Ibādāt*, it's essential to consistently reflect upon and renew your *Niyyah*, in order to feel their sweetness. Failing to engage with the essence of *'Ibādah* may result in the *'Ibādah* becoming a mere habitual practice. An *'Ibādah* like *Salāh* involves words and actions, and it also has a deeper spiritual essence. Some perform *Salāh* by reciting the memorized verses and phrases as well as performing the associated movements without genuinely contemplating the significance of their words or reflecting on the essence of the *'Ibādah* itself.

When this occurs, *'Ibādāt* like *Salāh* won't really impact that individual. They'll exit their *Salāh* and *Siyām* in the same state that they entered. Why? *'Ibādāt* are done many times a day. Some are done ten or hundreds of times a day, and it's common for them to devolve into mere routines if the intention is not refreshed. When this occurs, the sweetness and joy and spiritual fulfilment derived from these *'Ibādāt* will be lost.

Don't turn your *'Ibādāt* into routines and habits, rather turn your habits into *'Ibādāt* with the right *Niyyah*. Many habits turn into an act of *'Ibādah* just by having the right *Niyyah*. Don't let the opposite happen. And while you do all this that we talk about, be mindful of *Du'ā*. Ask Allāh ﷻ to bless you with joy in your *'Ibādah*. A believer is powerless in

this matter and in everything else, unless Allāh ﷻ grants him strength. Also, in order to taste the sweetness of *'Ibādah*, you need to make the purpose of your existence on this earth your number one concern. *'Ibādah* must be your number one concern on this earth.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات : ٥٦﴾

And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except to worship Me. (aḍ-Ḍāriyāt:56)

A wise individual was once asked, "Do *Dunyā* distractions and thoughts ever come to you while you're in *Salāh*?" And that person said, "Is there really anything more important to think about than *Salāh*?" There's no matter greater than *Salāh*, therefore how can one contemplate on anything else while he's in *Salāh*? Your worries are as big as your concerns.

Focus on making *'Ibādah* your top priority and your top concern, and you'll attain sweetness in *'Ibādah*. If you have a hobby that you really enjoy and you make it your top concern, and then there's a chance to participate and get involved in that hobby, you'll be very excited and very happy to take part in it, especially when you're thinking about the rewards and medals you may earn. By making *'Ibādah* your concern, you will find joy in it in this *Dunyā*, while at the same time accumulating *Ajr* with Allāh ﷻ.

To make *'Ibādah* your greatest concern, you need proper *Tawakkul* on Allāh ﷻ. *Tawakkul* on Allāh ﷻ has a strong connection with attaining sweetness in *'Ibādah*. When one places their trust in Allāh ﷻ regarding their sustenance, their marriage, their children, and their employment, then these matters will diminish in their level of concern, because they entrusted them to Allāh ﷻ. That will then elevate the priority of *'Ibādah* as their foremost concern. True *Tawakkul* on Allāh will make Allāh ﷻ and

worshipping him your biggest concern. You will then find relief from the worries and concerns that you entrusted Allāh ﷻ with.

When you perform *'Ibādāt*, clear your mind of all worldly distractions. When it's time for *Salāh*, or you want to recite *Qur'ān*, set aside your worries and concentrate fully on this sacred moment of *'Ibādah*. This may prove challenging in the beginning, but with practice, it becomes achievable over time. You need to prepare for an *'Ibādah* to see its sweetness. For example, attaining *Khushū'* and sweetness in *Salāh* starts way before *Salāh*, even before *Adhān*. It starts in *Wudū'*, if not before. Start your internal preparation for *Salāh* with *Wudū'*, and focus on *Wudū'* and *Khushū'* in *Wudū'*. Some get surprised when you tell them there's *Khushū'* in *Wudū'*. When you think about *Wudū'* and you realize that while you're washing your face in *Wudū'*, it's not only your physical face you're clearing. It's all the sins you see with your eyes being cleansed. Similarly, when you wash your hands, all the wrong things you've done with them are being wiped away. The same goes for your feet, as mentioned in the *Hadīth* that's in Sahīh Muslim.

If you truly understand this and you avoid treating *Wudū'* as just a physical act, as most do, you experience a deep sense of humility and sweetness in *Wudū'*, and that will be carried on to the *Salāh*. When you contemplate that, that *Hadīth* in Sahīh Muslim[1] — and there are many more — you'll realize that the water you're washing your physical parts with is in reality brightness you're rinsing your heart out with. Then you can understand why many of the *Salaf* always renewed their *Wudū'* even when they were sure they were on *Wudū'*. They sought to add brightness on top of brightness, enjoying the sweetness they never got enough of. After *Wudū'*, take some time out to do *Istighfār*, recite the *Qur'ān*, listen to the *Adhān* with concentration and repeat after the *Mu'adhin*.

Just like what I said about *Wudū'*, many get surprised to know that listening to *Adhān* should be like how you listen to the *Qur'ān*. Ibn Jurayj

[1] Sahih Muslim 246

related in Musannaf ʻAbd Ar-Razzāq that some of the *Salaf* used to listen to the *Adhān* in the same manner that they listened to the *Qur'ān*.[1] They listened attentively in *Khushū'* and contemplation. Repeating after the *Mu'adhin* and making *Du'ā* between the *Adhān* and the ʻ*Iqāmah* is essential in preparing yourself for the *Salāh*. Making *Tawbah* and *Istighfār* so you can stand before Allāh ﷻ with a clean state — doing all this before the *Salāh* will attain one sweetness in those *'Ibādah* and then in *Salāh* itself. Someone who takes five minutes out for *Salāh* will not feel the same as one who prepares himself in the way that I mentioned.

Whatever you do, keep pushing yourself forward in an attempt to create and maintain a feeling of joy in your *'Ibādah*. If you don't feel the sweetness in *Salāt Adh-Dhuhr*, try in *Salāt Al-'Asr*, if not, try in *Salāt Al-Maghrib*. Aim to reach the sweetness of *'Ibādah* of *Ramadān* in the beginning, if you can't, in the middle. If that doesn't work, in the last ten days. If not, in the six days of *Shawwāl* or the many *Nawāfil* that follow, or in next *Ramadān In shā'* Allāh.

Continuously strive to experience the sweetness in *'Ibādah* and remain persistent in your efforts. That's a form of *Jihād An-Nafs*. Some in the past said, "My *Nafs* was in resistance to the *'Ibādāt*. Ultimately, I triumphed in guiding my *Nafs* to Allāh ﷻ and my *Nafs* began to rejoice at *'Ibādāt*." Keep working hard to experience the joy of *'Ibādah* through these methods. It takes effort and sacrifice, but your effort will not go in vain, and it will not last forever, because when Allāh ﷻ sees the servant striving with sincerity, He will help them achieve the level of *Īmān* that they seek. He will reward them for their hard work with sweetness in *'Ibādah* that surpasses any pain that they endured while they were trying to attain it. We'll stop here.

[1] Al-Muṣannaf li-ʿAbd ar-Razzāq, Ṭ. Al-Majlis Al-ʿIlmī – Al-Hind, 1/480; Ṭ. Dār at-Taʾṣīl, 2/181

Attaining Inner Peace

The last talk was pertaining to sweetness in *'Ibādah*, and of course, that not only affects the *'Ibādah* itself, but it affects one's entire life. However, this talk is about bringing inner peace and tranquillity into one's entire life. There are many factors to consider when it comes to seeking inner peace and happiness in life from an Islāmic perspective. However, I can summarize the key to achieving inner peace in one word, and that's *"Tawhīd". Tawhīd* is the *Jannah* of this *Dunyā*. Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ said,

أَهْل السَّعَادَةِ هُمْ أَهْلُ التَّوْحِيدِ

The people of happiness are the people of Tawhīd.[1]

The ones who embrace *Tawhīd* — and their happiness is for both *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. The level of your *Tawhīd* and how strong it is will determine how much peace, comfort, and contentment you will feel in your heart in this *Dunyā*. It's a Qur'ānic principle.

مَآ أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَمَن يُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُۥ ... ﴿ ٱلتَّغَابُن : ١١ ﴾

No disaster strikes except by permission of Allāh. And whoever believes in Allāh - He will guide his heart… (at-Taghābun:11)

No calamity befalls anyone except by the will of Allāh ﷻ,

وَمَن يُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ

And whoever believes in Allāh.

Believes in what? In *Tawhīd*. What do they get?

يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُۥ

[1] Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā, T. Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 9/29

Allāh will guide their hearts.

Calamities befall everyone, Muslim and *Kāfir* alike, but there's a specialty for those who believe in *Tawhīd*. Allāh ﷻ didn't say *"And whoever believes in Tawhīd will be free of trials and hardships."* He didn't say that in this verse nor in any other verse. He said He will rightly guide their hearts. Meaning, in the most difficult times, their hearts will find tranquillity and calmness and they will be comforted and reassured, as 'Ikrimah ﷺ mentioned. Allāh instils a sense of inner peace and contentment in the hearts of the believers in *Tawhīd*, and likewise, He closes and constricts the hearts that have no *Tawhīd*, as if they were climbing up to the sky, as the verse states.

وَمَن يُرِدْ أَن يُضِلَّهُۥ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُۥ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ...﴿ ٱلْأَنْعَام : ١٢٥﴾

and whoever He wants to send astray, He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky… (al-ʾAnʿām:125)

Through *Tawhīd*, Allāh ﷻ filled the hearts of those who came before us with immense joy in this *Dunyā*. Ibn Al-Qayyim ﷺ mentioned that some in the past stated that they felt so much joy in this *Dunyā*, so much that they believed that if the inhabitants of *Jannah* experienced a fraction of the joy that they experience in this *Dunyā*, then the inhabitants of *Jannah* are living in a state of bliss. These people weren't rich. They definitely faced a lot of challenges in their lives. They lived in poverty and they dealt with tough times. But they found great joy through their strong belief in *Tawhīd*. Wealth and palaces weren't what made their *Dunyā* so pleasurable.

Ibn Al-Qayyim ﷺ quotes some of them as saying "We're living in such pleasure and happiness that if the kings and their heirs knew about

it, they would fight us for it with their swords."[1] With *Tawhīd*, their hearts danced with joy. Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ faced a multitude of challenges as we all know. He faced hardships throughout his life. Despite being imprisoned and enduring various trials, he felt as if he was living in a *Jannah* on this Earth, and that *Jannah* was in his heart, no one could take it away.

Ibn Al-Qayyim ﷺ recounts that his teacher Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ, told him once, "What harm can my enemies do to me? What harm can my enemies inflict upon me? My *Jannah* is in my heart."[2] He's the one who said, "In this *Dunyā* exists a *Jannah*. Those who don't enter the *Jannah* of this *Dunyā* won't enter the *Jannah* of the *Ākhirah*." It's incredible how Allāh ﷻ gives some of his servants a sneak peek of *Jannah* before they actually meet him. Allāh ﷻ opens the doors of *Jannah* for some in this *Dunyā* so they can experience its joy, and that motivates them to work hard and chase after the *Jannah* of the *Ākhirah*.

Tawhīd is what infuses joy into the most challenging moments of life. How? Let me give a closer example — closer to home — so no one will say these are men who were in the past and they're different. Our family — my family — faces, and we continue to face, challenges that only Allāh ﷻ knows about and only He can alleviate. Some of it is public, but most of it not many know about. My father, may *Allāh* ﷻ give him a long life full of deeds, maintained a sense of joy throughout every single one of our trials, whether it was imprisonment or threats or raids or trials or losses of lives or illnesses. All throughout them and in the midst of them, he remained one of the happiest people, if not the happiest person you can see. His resilient spirit and his cheerful disposition remained unwavering — always in strong spirit, always in a cheerful demeanour, *Allāhumma bārak lahu*. In the midst of his struggles, he had a wide-open heart worrying about helping others and giving *Da'wah* to others. The initial

[1] Ad-Dāʾ wa-ad-Dawāʾ, Ṭ. Dār Al-Maʿrifah, 1/121

[2] Al-Wābil aṣ-Ṣayyib, Ṭ. Dār Aṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/109

government search or raid, which was more than two decades ago, it was very surprising, shocking, and unexpected, and it was followed by a series of dozens upon dozens of other raids throughout the years. During raids, during trials, solitary confinement, prison cells, illnesses, and various other hardships, he remained completely unphased. This is not my observation, but rather one can ask the thousands who visit or visited him, or those who studied and study under him, or those who communicate with him. Most, if not all of them, are familiar with his renowned statement that he tells everyone about being the happiest man alive on this planet. He shares this sentiment with everyone. And by Allāh the Creator of the seven heavens, he genuinely actually feels this happiness. He entered the *Jannah* of this *Dunyā In shā'* Allāh, and may Allāh ﷻ grant him the *Jannah* of the *Ākhirah*.

In happy and in sad times, his face has the brightness of delight, may Allāh ﷻ grant him the *Nuṣrat al-Na'īm* of the *Ākhirah* as well. Do you think he or those of the past who felt this way don't have or didn't have difficulties? I know many people who lost a loved one, and they were traumatized for life. I know many who didn't get a battalion breaking down their doors at 6 am dozens of times, but rather they got a simple visit by an agent, and they were traumatized and changed their entire life. These people were talking about feeling joyful through their *Tawhīd*. They feel *Jannah* on this Earth despite the hardship that they faced, and despite the lack of luxury and comfort in their lives.

When I would be distressed, and I mentioned this more than ten years ago, seeing him and hearing his words would lift my spirits and it would turn anxiety into relief, strength, certainty, and peace. In the most difficult times in prison, in the prison cell, he would tell me,

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ ٱلْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُۥ...
﴿ هُود : ١٢٣﴾

And to Allāh belong the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth and to Him will be returned the matter, all of it… (Hūd:123)

"To Allāh belongs the Ghayb (the Unseen) in the heavens and in the earth and to Him returns…" He would ask me, "Half of the affairs? One-third of the affairs?" I would obviously correct his intentional mistake and say,

كُلُّهُ !

"All of it! All the affairs return to Allāh!" The verse has grammatical linguistic affirmations to emphasize that all affairs return to Allāh ﷻ. So put your trust in *Allāh*! That's *Tawhīd*. Allāh said to Him returns all the affairs,

كُلُّهُ !

Turn to the One Who all of the affairs return to and be happy with what He decrees. When I used to brainstorm and reflect on the oppression and consider the violations of what contradicts their own, cursed, flawed laws, he would advise me to take it easy. He would say, "Don't think about anything, relax!

...وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ...﴿ ٱلْأَنْعَام : ١١٢﴾

...Had it not been Allāh's *will, they wouldn't have done it!... (al-ʾAnʿām:112)*

When there were trials and dates and judgments coming up, he would always remind us that the judgment is not in anyone's hands. It's not in any human hands; the judgment is from Allāh.

...وَٱللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهِ...﴿ ٱلرَّعْد : ٤١﴾

...And Allāh judges, there is none to put back His Judgement… (ar-Raʿd:41)

His decision is the one that can't be replaced or appealed or repealed or intercepted or reversed or stopped. The point of mentioning my father is to point out that what provided him with joy and comfort during hardships was *Tawhīd*. What he imparted to me to achieve that same comfort was *Tawhīd*. When he says,

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ ٱلْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُۥ

And to Allāh belong the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth and to Him will be returned the matter, all of it… (Hūd:123)

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ

...Had it not been Allāh's *will, they wouldn't have done it!... (al-ʾAnʿām:112)*

وَٱللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهِ

...And Allāh judges, there is none to put back His Judgement… (ar-Raʿd:41)

those are among the so many verses and proofs on the Power of Allāh ﷻ and the Qualities of Allāh ﷻ, among other Tawhīdic aspects that bring comfort and serenity to an individual's heart.

One of the scholars from the past came across a man who seemed very troubled, he seemed very worried. The Shaykh said, "I'm going to ask you three questions on *Tawhīd*. Answer them." The man said, "Go ahead." The Shaykh asked, "Is there anything in this universe that happens without Allāh's will?" The man said, "Absolutely not." He's teaching him *Tawhīd*. It brings comfort and joy to know and believe that Allāh ﷻ is in control of everything and that no one can help or harm without Allāh's ﷻ Will.

The lessons that the Messenger ﷺ shared with his young cousin while he was still a young boy, are uplifting. They bring happiness and comfort to every believer in *Tawhīd*, regardless of their struggles, and most importantly they strengthen one's *Īmān*. He taught young Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ *Tawhīd*, to be mindful of Allāh ﷻ and Allāh will protect him. He said, "Be mindful of Allāh ﷻ, and you will find Him in front of you." He taught him that if the nations, if the world, if the globe were to gather in order to benefit you, it would not benefit you except with that which Allāh ﷻ had already prescribed for you. And if the world, the globe with all their might and power, were to gather to harm you, they will not harm you except with what Allāh ﷻ had already prescribed for you.[1]

If a marriage doesn't go through, if it's loss of wealth you're struggling with, if it's a promotion you didn't get, an illness, death of a loved one, or threats of harm that you're going through, remember what he taught Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. And he taught him that what passes you by — whatever you failed to attain — wasn't going to befall you, and what has befallen you wasn't going to pass you by. He taught him that success and victory come through patience.

The scholar then asked a second question on *Tawhīd*. He said, "Can anything that Allāh ﷻ has decreed for your provision be taken away?" The man said "No." That's *Tawhīd*! Part of *Tawhīd* is to believe that Allāh ﷻ is the Provider and that a person's sustenance is determined before they were on this earth, before they were in their mother's womb.

وَفِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿ٱلذَّارِيَات : ٢٢﴾

And in the heaven is your provision and whatever you are promised.

No one can take it away. The scholar then asked the third question, "Is it possible for your lifespan to be reduced by even a single moment

[1] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2516

than what has already been decreed by Allāh ﷻ?" The man said, "Absolutely not." Lifespans and destinies are under the control of Allāh ﷻ. When the time comes for someone to leave this *Dunyā*, there's nothing they can do to stay, no matter how hard they try.

﴿وَلَن يُؤَخِّرَ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهَا...﴾ ٱلْمُنَافِقُون : ١١

But never will Allāh delay a soul when its time has come… (al-Munāfiqūn:11)

Allāh will not delay a soul when its time has come. If it's not their time yet, the person won't die, regardless of the challenges or danger that they encounter or the situations they find themselves in, and the examples on that are plenty from the past and the present. The Shaykh was trying to teach him that if nothing happens but by the Will of Allāh, if no one can increase or decrease your provision and your life but Allāh ﷻ, why would you be worried? He told that individual, "Now tell me, explain to me, why are you worried?!" The point is, the stronger a Muslim's *Tawhīd* is, the stronger their trust in Allāh is, the more peace they will feel in their heart.

Islām teaches other secondary factors that contribute to achieving joy and inner peace in this *Dunyā*, however, I highlighted the fundamental and most significant one, which is *Tawhīd*. We can explore other factors in the future, *In shā'* Allāh. I started with a promise from Allāh ﷻ,

﴿وَمَن يُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُۥ...﴾ ٱلتَّغَابُن : ١١...

...And whoever believes in Allāh - He will guide his heart…(at-Taghābun:11)

And I'll leave you with another promise.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل : ٩٧﴾

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer — We will surely cause him to live a good life…(an-Naḥl:97)

Whoever does good

وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ

while he believes — believes in what? Believes in *Tawhīd*!

فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً

a promise from Allāh to those who meet those stipulated conditions.

وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ

Tawhīd is a fundamental principle and condition. What does he get?

حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً

He would be blessed with a happy life, inner peace, contentment, provision, and everything else good. *"Ḥayātan Ṭayyibah"* is for a *Muwahid* who believes in *Tawhīd*. The *Qur'ān* instills a sense of peace in the heart of the believer in *Tawhīd* that cannot be shaken by the people of the globe. The Qur'ān wants the believer in *Tawhīd* to be optimistic and content in every situation, no matter how bad it gets. Believing in *Tawhīd* means to keep at the forefront of your mind that if Allāh ﷻ is with you, never worry who or what is against you. *Ḥayātan Ṭayyibah*, that's in this *Dunyā*, because the next portion of this verse pertains to the reward in the *Ākhirah*.

...وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿ ٱلنَّحْل : ٩٧﴾

…And We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do. (an-Naḥl:97)

Wa-Allāhu a'lam, we'll conclude with this. *Wa-Allāhu a'lam*.

Don’t Belittle Minor Sins

I spoke in the past about some issues that pertain to the *Fiqh* of sins, and among the *Fiqh* of sins is not to belittle minor sins. Don’t underestimate a sin even if it’s among the minor sins. Random, exceptional, minor sins can easily be forgiven and erased in so many various ways. They can get erased through some of your daily *‘Ibādāt* without you even perceiving it at times, and that’s from the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ. That’s unlike major sins that require a special, specific *Tawbah* for that particular sin, with the specified conditions. Minor sins can be forgiven, for example, by simply avoiding major sins.

إِن تَجْتَنِبُواْ كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ...
﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء : ٣١﴾

If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins… (an-Nisāʾ:31)

Good deeds after minor sins wash away the minor sins.

وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ طَرَفَيِ ٱلنَّهَارِ وَزُلَفًا مِّنَ ٱلَّيْلِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلْحَسَنَٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ...﴿ هُود : ١١٤﴾

And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. (Hūd:114)

Minor sins get washed away by the regular, obligatory *Salawāt*, by *Ramadān*, by *Salāt Al-Jumu’ah*, and by *Hajj*. The *Hadīth* in Sahīh Muslim,

الصَّلَوَاتُ الخَمْسُ، وَالجُمُعَةُ إِلَى الجُمُعَةِ، وَرَمَضَانُ إِلَى رَمَضَانَ، مُكَفِّراتٌ مَا بَيْنَهُنَّ إِذَا اجْتُنِبَتِ الكَبَائِرُ

The five (daily) prayers and one Friday prayer to (the next) Friday prayer are expiations (for the sins committed in the intervals) between them.

Wudū' for *Salāh* also erases some of the minor sins. *Adhkār* after the *Salawāt — Subḥān Allāh*, *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, *Allāhu Akbar*, saying each thirty-three times and then completing the hundred by saying,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

is a forgiveness for minor sins. Saying "Amīn" along with the Imām in the congregational *Salāh* is a forgiveness for minor sins, we took that in the Tafsir class recently. Fasting the Day of *'Āshurā* and fasting the Day of *'Arafah* is a forgiveness for minor sins. Saying,

سُبْحَانَ اَللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ

one-hundred times is a forgiveness for minor sins as well. Saying,

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيَّ الْقَيُّومَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

is a forgiveness for minor sins. And there are many other various means as well.

During the previous *Ramadān*, we discussed *Ahādīth* of this nature and examined whether the forgiveness encompasses major sins, and we concluded that the prevalent opinion is that they don't cover major sins. Major sins require a special repentance for that particular sin, and while *Al-Ghafūr Ar-Rahīm* forgives these minor sins, there are instances where underestimating these minor sins can escalate their status into the level of major sins, and that can lead to one's destruction.

The Messenger ﷺ, who taught us the various *Ahādīth* emphasizing the simplicity of obtaining forgiveness for minor sins, also warned about

minor sins in numerous *Ahādīth*. In Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Sahl Ibn Sa'd ﷺ the Messenger ﷺ said,

إِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَقَّرَاتِ الذُّنُوبِ فَإِنَّمَا مَثَلُ مُحَقَّرَاتِ الذُّنُوبِ كَقَوْمٍ نَزَلُوا فِي بَطْنِ وَادٍ، فَجَاءَ ذَا بِعُودٍ، وَجَاءَ ذَا بِعُودٍ حَتَّى أَنْضَجُوا خُبْزَتَهُمْ، وَإِنَّ مُحَقَّرَاتِ الذُّنُوبِ مَتَى يُؤْخَذْ بِهَا صَاحِبُهَا تُهْلِكْهُ

Beware of minor sins, for their example is like a group of people who camped in the bottom of a valley. One person brought a small stick, another brought a small stick, until they had gathered enough to bake their bread. Indeed, minor sins, when a person is held accountable for them, will destroy him.[1]

The Messenger ﷺ warned about *Muhaqqarāt Adh-Dhunūb*, the minor sins, the sins that people consider insignificant. The Messenger ﷺ in that *Hadīth* warned about underestimating minor sins, because they can add up and destroy a sinner. He compared minor sins to a group of people who are in a valley, and they want to make a fire. One person in the valley brings a stick, then another one brings a stick, and so on. Before you know it, they have enough sticks to make a fire and the fire is big enough to bake their bread. A single stick is insignificant to ignite a fire that is suitable for cooking. A single, minor, random, exceptional sin will not bring one's destruction *In shā'* Allāh, and it will be forgiven through the means that we mentioned *In shā'* Allāh. Once there are a lot of minor sins, it's like a bunch of sticks starting a big fire. Those sticks come together to make a huge fire, like small sins can pile up and eventually lead to the destruction of the sinner *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*.

Many avoid major sins and won't go near them. They're strong in resisting those major sins, but then they fall into many minor sins, and that's like an individual who encounters a lion and he manages to escape, then he faces a huge camel that's attacking him and he gets away, but then

[1] Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭ. Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 37/467

a tiny ant bites him and hurts him, and one ant leads to another and they swarm him and bring him down. That's similar to someone who steers clear of major sins, but still gets caught up in the minor sins. If you notice, the Messenger ﷺ in the *Hadīth* — this specific *Hadīth* — didn't warn about major sins, because they were rare among the *Sahābah* and they were very careful to avoid them.

The Messenger ﷺ felt it was important to warn about little things that some may overlook, and that's a lesson for all of us not to get carried away with these sins since they get forgiven so easily. The frequent occurrence of small sins is dangerous, because it has a huge impact on the heart, similar to how drops of water can create a mark on a rock. Water is soft and the rock or cement is hard. If you were to see a faucet that dripped on a cement or on a tile, or a spring that constantly drips on a rock, that soft water will eventually make a mark on the cement and the rock, and that's how minor sins are to the heart. The Messenger ﷺ even warned Ā'ishah ﵂ about this. He said,

يَا عَائِشَةُ إِيَّاكِ وَمُحَقَّرَاتِ الْأَعْمَالِ، فَإِنَّ لَهَا مِنَ اللَّهِ طَالِبًا

O Ā'ishah! Beware of sins that are regarded as insignificant, because they have a special angel tasked with writing them down.[1]

Having a special angel just for that shows how great and significant they are, even if they're labelled as minor sins.

Now there's an issue. If the minor sins can be easily absolved through the deeds that we mentioned — through *Wudū'*, through the *Salawāt*, through *Salāt Al-Jumu'ah* — and most of them are observed by Muslims daily, then why did the Messenger ﷺ caution against them? What makes them so dangerous? Anas ﵁ said — and Anas ﵁ was speaking to the second-best generation, the first best generation after the *Sahābah*, the *Tābi'īn* — he said,

[1] Sunan Ibn Majah 4243

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَعْمَلُونَ أَعْمَالًا هِيَ أَدَقُّ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ كُنَّا نَعُدُّهَا عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ من الموبقات. يَعْنِي المهلكات

You indulge in actions which you consider as tiny as hair, you consider it insignificant. During the Messenger’s ﷺ time, we used to regard them as Al-Mūbiqāt, as destructive sins.[1]

Aside from the general effect of sins that we took and that we know about, and we spoke about in the past, the danger of minor sins arises when an individual remains steadfast in continuously committing a single minor sin or the combination of many, various minor sins. When such a behaviour becomes habitual and a person in persistent in committing that one minor sin or those various minor sins, it escalates to the level of a major sin, and that is according to the majority *Ulamā’* — and among them form the *Sahābah* is Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ, and from the *Ulamā’* is Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ, Ibn Al-Qayyim ﷺ, Ibn Rajab ﷺ, An-Nawawi ﷺ, and many others.

A minor sin retains its status — it’s always a minor sin − however, certain external circumstances can elevate it to the status of a major sin, such as persistence in committing that minor sin. Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ and Ibn Al-Qayyim ﷺ both stated that continual commission of minor sins may be considered equivalent to a major sin or potentially even more severe. Persistence on minor sins indicates lack of respect and care, which goes against honouring Allāh ﷻ. Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ said,

لَا صَغِيرَةَ مَعَ إِصْرَارٍ، وَلَا كَبِيرَةَ مَعَ اسْتِغْفَارٍ

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6492

There's no minor sin with persistence, and there's no major sin with Istighfār.[1]

It's not an authentic *Hadīth*, but it's authentic as a statement of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. What does that mean? Meaning with *Istighfār*, with *Tawbah*, the major sin is forgiven *In shā'* Allāh. With persistence on minor sins, it's no longer a minor sin, it's the equivalent of a major sin.

So the first danger is persistence on committing minor sins. The second is underestimating the sin. Minor sins shouldn't be taken lightly. Taking them lightly can show a lack of respect and regard to Allāh ﷻ. Fudayl Ibn 'Iyad ﷺ said, "The smaller the sin seems to you, the bigger it is to Allāh ﷻ, and the bigger it seems to you, the smaller it is to Allāh ﷻ."[2] And that can be explained by another statement that was mentioned by Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ. He said, "The believer perceives his sins, whether big or small, as if he's sitting underneath a mountain that may fall on his head. And the *Fājir* sees his sins like a fly that passes on his nose, he motions to the fly with his hand to get it away."[3] That's how he sees sins, a *Fājir*. Seeing it as a big deal, no matter what type of sin it is, whether major or minor, seeing them as a big deal lessens the impact on the heart and on the Judgment Day *In shā'* Allāh.

Underestimating a sin eventually leads to normalization of that sin, which has a negative effect on the heart, and it may lead to committing major sins. When someone is about to commit a small sin, there are two ways to look at it. One way is to say, "It's just a minor sin, it's not a big deal. It's just a glance and a kiss and a touch. I'll go ahead with it. Next *Wudū'*, next *Salāh*, next *Ramadān* it'll be forgiven *In shā'* Allāh." The other way to look at it is to consider Who is being disobeyed when

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[1] Jāmiʿ Al-ʿUlūm wa-Al-Ḥikam, Ṭ. Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1/449; Ṭ. Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1/423; Ṭ. Dār as-Salām, 2/534

[2] Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, Ṭ. ar-Risālah, 8/427

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6308

committing that sin. The second option is the ideal thinking of the believer. Al-Awza'i ﷺ reported that Bilāl Ibn Sa'd ﷺ, a *Tābi'ī*, stated in his famous quote,

لَا تَنْظُرْ إِلَى صِغَرِ الْخَطِيئَةِ، وَلَكِنِ انْظُرْ مَنْ عَصَيْتَ

Don't think about how small the sin is, think about who you disobeyed, or who you're going to disobey.[1]

Think of how mighty the one you're disobeying is. Some people wouldn't go against their spouses or their parents in something that their spouses or parents don't like, even if they can get away with it without them knowing, because they love them, they respect them, and they honour them. However, for some, it seems that Allāh ﷻ is the least important witness to their sins. They don't estimate Allāh ﷻ with an estimation due to Him when they're sinning.

Another danger in the small sins is feeling happy about them. Some *Ulamā'* listed feeling happy about committing a small sin or being proud of a sin as a major sin. Some person can look at a *Harām* glance and feel happy about it, and that can elevate it to the status of a major sin. Another person could glance at a *Harām* and regret it, and the next *Salāh*, the next *Wudū'*, it's forgiven *In shā'* Allāh.

Another danger similar to the previous one is openly and publicly committing the sins and bragging and talking about the sins — bragging about sins or talking about them while Allāh ﷻ concealed them for you. Talking about sins or bragging about them or exposing the sins to others elevates it to the status of a major sin. Unless one, of course, is mentioning the sin to a Shaykh to get some advice on repenting or something of that nature. Yes, you committed the minor sin, but you tagged on a major sin

[1] Az-Zuhd li-Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/311

by boasting about that sin or committing that sin in public. That falls under *Mujāharah*.

كُلُّ أُمَّتِي مُعَافَاةٌ إِلَّا الْمُجَاهِرِينَ

All the people of my Ummah would get pardon for their sins except those who publicize them.[1]

A believer feels scared and shy of Allāh ﷻ, and he hides his faults and is ashamed of his faults while he tries to purify himself and repent from those faults. Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said there are things that follow a sin that can be worse than the original sin itself. He said feeling no shame of *Raqīb* and *'Atīd* on your right and your left while committing a sin is worse than the sin itself. He [also] said laughing about a sin without realizing what Allāh ﷻ might do to you is worse than the sin itself. He said being happy that you succeeded in committing the sin is worse than the sin itself. He said feeling sad about missing out on a sin is worse than the sin itself. And he said being scared of the wind moving the curtain at your door while you're sinning, fearing someone will see you, but not being troubled by the thought of Allāh ﷻ watching you is worse than the actual sin itself. Abu Al-'Abbās, 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mu'taz Billāh was a poet during the 'Abāssi Khilāfah. He said,

خَلِّ الذُّنُوبَ صَغِيرَهَا ... وَكَبِيرَهَا فَهُوَ التُّقَى

Abandon minor and major sins. That's piety, that's Taqwā.

Sins in this *Dunyā* should be looked at like a ground full of thorns.

[1] Sahih Muslim 2990

وَاصْنَعْ كَمَاشٍ فَوْقَ أَرْ ... ضِ الشَّوْكِ يَحْذَرُ مَا يَرَى

One who walks over a thorny ground, walks carefully and is always cautious of thorns that lie ahead of him.

And that’s how one should walk on this earth in relationship to sins.

لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ صَغِيرَةً ... إِنَّ الْجِبَالَ مِنَ الْحَصَى

Don’t underestimate the small sins, because mountains are made from pebbles.[1]

And we’ll stop here.

[1] Jāmiʿ Al-ʿUlūm wa-Al-Ḥikam, Ṭ. Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1/402; Ṭ. Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1/382; Ṭ. Dār as-Salām liṭ-Ṭibāʿah, 2/472

Attaining Wara’

Wara' is a significant stage or level in the pursuit of achieving nearness to Allāh ﷻ. Attempting to attain the peak of *Taqwā* doesn't only mean to refrain from *Harām*, but there's an additional step above that within the meaning of *Taqwā*, which is abstaining from doubtful matters. *Wara'* is refraining from doubtful issues as well as permissible matters, to not only steer clear from *Harām*, but also to create a greater distance from it. *Wara'* is incorporating an additional level of caution to avoid engaging in *Harām* by abstaining from certain aspects of what's considered Halāl. It's steering clear of any type of doubt by creating a protective shield between you and the *Harām* by leaving doubtful matters. *Wara'* is also reflecting on your actions with every blink of an eye.

Sufyān Ath-Thawri said, "*Wara'* is very simple and easy. If something feels off to you, then avoid it."[1] When you're in doubt and something wavers in your soul and rankles in your heart and you feel uncomfortable about it, when you're uncertain about something and your heart is not at ease with it, when you dislike people finding out about something, *Wara'* means to leave it and to avoid it. And that's taken from the words of the Messenger ﷺ:

وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي صَدْرِكَ، وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلِعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ

Sinful conduct is what makes your heart uncomfortable, and that which you dislike that it would be exposed to people.[2]

Judging by whether the heart is at ease with something or not applies in some situations to some people — to certain people, not everyone. It's not a general rule for every matter nor for every person. It applies to those who strive for righteousness with hearts that are clean, pure, and sound. It applies to hearts and *Fitrahs* that haven't been polluted and tainted. It's directed to souls with proper Islamic upbringing, souls that are content

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 2/237; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 2/25

[2] Sahih Muslim 2553

and satisfied with Allāh ﷻ and His Orders, souls that aim to only please Allāh ﷻ. There are those with corrupted hearts and *Fitrahs* who indulge in sins that they don't even hesitate to publicly commit. They flaunt their reprehensible major sins in public and call for them. Sins like the abhorrent sins of the *Qawm Lūt* or *Zinā Wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. Those individuals see major sins, *Mūbiqāt*, and even *Shirk* at times as something that doesn't discomfort them, they feel at ease with them. Their *Fitrah* is so corrupted that it's your belief in the sinful nature of the act of *Qawm Lūt* that causes them discomfort. You'll find them engaging in such sins with a sense of comfort and ease with no regard or concern *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. Those are people with tainted *Fitrahs*. That's not who the *Hadīth*

وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي صَدْرِك

is referring to. They might prioritize − actually they do prioritize their heart feelings over the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. Tainted heart feelings, they give that priority over the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*, and Allāh ﷻ reprimanded some for that.

أَفَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ ٱتَّخَذَ إِلَـٰهَهُۥ هَوَىٰهُ...﴿ ٱلْجَاثِيَة: ٢٣﴾

Have you seen he who has taken as his god his (own) desire?...
(al-Jāthiyah:23)

The *Hadīth*,

وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي صَدْرِك

applies only for certain matters. When there's clear proof in the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* on some matter, there's no room for feelings or for discomfort. You do what you're ordered and refrain from what you're supposed to refrain from and you accept it wholeheartedly. Some matters are clearly *Harām*.

إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ...

That which is lawful is clear and that which is unlawful is clear…

The *Hadīth* that's in Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2] that's been described by some *Ulamā'* as being one-third or one-fourth of knowledge, some *Ulamā'* said that it's considered central to the teachings of this *Dīn.*

إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ...

That which is lawful is clear and that which is unlawful is clear…

There's *Harām* that's crisp clear. It's hard to miss this *Harām*, unless someone grew up in a remote area far from the Islāmic communities and was unable to reach out to anyone to ask them. Then there are matters of doubt.

وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ...

And between the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know…

Leaving the *Harām* is *Wājib*, leaving the matters of doubt is *Mustahhab*, but a person doesn't reach the status of *Wara'* unless he leaves both. So *Wara'* is to leave what's clearly *Harām*, that's the *Wājib* level of *Wara'* every Muslim should have. The *Hadīth* takes you step by step. Then there's other matters that are not so clear.

وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ...

And between the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know…

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 52

[2] Sahih Muslim 1599

And those matters that are not clear, that not many know, one should guard his *Dīn* by leaving them.

فَمَنِ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِرْضِهِ...

Thus he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honour…

That's similar to the *Hadīth*,

دَعْ مَا يَرِيبُكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يَرِيبُكَ

Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt.[1]

What type of doubts are we talking about? The doubts could be due to disputes among the righteous *Ulamā'* and their understanding of certain proofs. Some, based on their *Ijtihād* and their understanding of certain proofs, they may adopt a matter as a *Makrūh* while others may adopt it as a *Harām*. We're talking about genuine *Ulamā'* who fear Allāh ﷻ and who are not focused on pleasing the *Kuffār* or making their main purpose in life about simplifying things for others or for their audience, even when it's in contrast to the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. The matters of doubts may also arise from disagreements between righteous *Ulamā'* regarding the application of some proofs to present, current, ongoing events.

In situations of this nature or their like, if a sincere individual whose *Fitrah* is uncorrupted, if he consults a Shaykh and receives confirmation that some action is permissible, but he feels some inner discomfort regarding that action, *Wara'* means that it's advisable for that individual to refrain from proceeding with the matter.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "A person shouldn't solely base their religious rulings on asking an *'Ālim* or scholar, if they don't completely feel at ease

[1] Sunan an-Nasa'i 5711

with the matter and they have doubts in their hearts about accepting it."[1] Some matters of doubt may be about like ingredients in food products. Everyone believes pork is *Harām*. That falls under

وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ

It's clear. When you're out grocery shopping, you might come across ingredients in some products that raise questions about the potential presence of pork in them. *Wara'* means one should steer clear of buying that or eating it. Everyone agrees *Ribā* is *Harām*. Let's assume there was an inheritance left by someone whose money or a portion of it came from *Ribā*. In such a scenario, some *Ulamā'* believe that money gained through *Ribā* means is considered *Harām* on the one who earned it because of his act alone, and it doesn't stick with the actual money itself.

Based on that opinion, the *Harām* is on the person who acquired the money, who acquired the *Ribā*, and it doesn't affect the inheritors so they can inherit from that money. Other *Ulamā'* said that the money itself that derived from *Ribā* is tainted, it should be donated and the inheritors can't inherit *Harām Ribā*. They must donate it and not take it. The *Wara'* in such a doubtful matter with a legitimate dispute among righteous *Ulamā'* would be to leave that portion of *Ribā*.

Keep in mind, one should not let *Wara'* get so extensive and extreme that it causes him *Waswasa*. An individual shouldn't go to the extreme of saying, for example, "I'm not going hunting for fear the game might have been caught by someone else and then it escaped from that person, and now if I hunt, I might catch that animal." That's all based on assumptions, it has no reality to it. That's *Waswasa*, that's not *Wara'*. In the continuation of the *Hadīth*, that some *Ulamā'* considered it one-fourth of knowledge, the Messenger ﷺ said,

[1] Iʿlām Al-Muwaqqiʿīn ʿan Rabb Al-ʿĀlamīn, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Al-Jawzī, 6/192; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 4/195; Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 5/168

وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ

He who falls into doubtful matters eventually falls into what's unlawful.

كَالرَّاعِي يَرْعَى حَوْل الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَرْتَعَ فِيهِ

Like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein.

This is what *Wara'* is to our *Dīn*. Long ago, there were pastures owned by kings and they were strictly off limits to the general public. If a shepherd was found letting his animals graze in those areas, he would face harsh, severe consequences from the king. The shepherds took great care to keep their livestock away from these forbidden pastures, because they understood if they got too close there was a chance that their animals might wander into the prohibited pastures, and that would mean facing a harsh punishment from the king. That's a king's sanctuary and that's how shepherds took precaution in avoiding going into those pastures. The Messenger ﷺ said,

أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمًى أَلَا وَإِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ مَحَارِمُهُ

Every king has a sanctuary. Allāh's *sanctuary is His prohibitions.*

The shepherd not only steers clear of the area that the king declared off limits, but he's also very cautious and keeps his distance in order to be safe. Keeping your distance away from *Harām* in the same way is the definition of *Wara'*. *Wara'* serves as a safeguard and a means of protection for your *Dīn.*

وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ

He who falls into doubtful matters eventually falls into what's unlawful.

Focus on this rule. *Mubāh* means matters that are permissible. Matters of *Mubāh* are a barrier for a servant when it comes to *Makrūh*. If

someone excessively engages in too much *Mubāh,* it might, or most likely will drag him towards committing the *Makrūh*. The level of *Wara'* should be to leave some of the *Mubāh* for fear of reaching the *Makrūh*. To reach the high status of *Taqwā* in *Wara'*, one needs to refrain from doing something in which there's no sin of doing them for fear of falling into something in which there is a dislike or sin in doing them. Again, *Mubāh* serves as a protective barrier for an individual against what's *Makrūh*. Excessive engagement in what's *Mubāh* can compromise or diminish this barrier. That will increase the likelihood of the individual being drawn towards what's *Makrūh*. *Makrūh* acts as an obstacle that separates the servant from *Harām*, engaging excessively in *Makrūh* can diminish this barrier, and that can potentially result in the individual committing *Harām* acts *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*.

There are numerous remarkable examples of *Wara'* in the actions, of course, of the Messenger ﷺ and in the stories of the *Salaf*. *Sadaqah* is *Harām* to the Messenger ﷺ and his family, as we know. In Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2], the Prophet ﷺ came upon a date that was on the road. It's Halāl, because he doesn't know of its origin, he doesn't know if it's *Sadaqah* or not, but there's a doubt in it. There's a doubt that that date may be from the *Sadaqah*. He said,

لَوْلاَ أَنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الصَّدَقَةِ، لأَكَلْتُهَا

Were it not that I feared that it may be part of the Sadaqah, I would eat it.

When his baby grandson ﷺ took a date from the dates of the *Sadaqah* and he put it in his mouth, he could have let him go with that. He's a non-*Mukallaf* infant or young boy. The Prophet ﷺ said, *"Kikh Kikh! Don't you know that we do not eat from the Sadaqah?"*[3] Ash-Shātibi in Al-

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 2431

[2] Sahih Muslim 1071

[3] Ibid., 1069

Muwāfaqa[1] and Ibn Al-Jawzi in Sifat As-Safwā[2] mentioned the story of the great worshiper Bishr Ibn Al-Hārith Ibn ʻAbd Ar-Rahmān Al-Marwazi. He was known *Muhaddith* who eventually devoted his life to *'Ibādah* during the time of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. He earned his name Al-Hāfi, he was known as Bishr Al-Hāfi, which means barefoot, due to his habit of walking without shoes. He had a sister like him, just as good as him, in her *'Ibādah* and *Zuhd* and *Wara'*.

She went to Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and she asked him a question. She said, "I spin wool on the roof of my house during nighttime, and sometimes the government officials and the patrols pass by with their torches and they light up the area to see what's going on, and I benefit from the light that they turn on from their torches." She took advantage of their light to spin some wool in the dark nights. She wanted to know if that's permissible, to spin wool using their light? Imām Ahmad was astonished at that level of *Wara'*, he knew she had to be someone special. He said, "Who are you?" She said I'm the sister of Bishr Ibn Al-Hārith. Imām Ahmad wept and he said, "From your household comes true *Wara'*, don't spin using their light." It might be permissible for an ordinary person to benefit from such a light, but Imām Ahmad held her to a more elevated standard of *Wara'* because of the noble background she belonged to. Any hint of doubt, no matter how slight, should be kept from entering the home of Bishr Al- Hāfi.

The stories from the books of *Wara'* are astonishing. It was mentioned that the great *Khalīfah* 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz would block his nose to prevent inhaling the scent of musk that was designated for the Muslim treasury. He said the value of musk lies in its fragrance, he was determined not to derive any personal benefit from the wealth of the Muslim community, even if it was simply the aroma of the musk that

[1] Al-Muwāfaqāt, Ṭ. Dār Ibn ʿAffān, 5/249

[2] Ṣifat aṣ-Ṣafwah, Ṭ. Dār Al-Ḥadīth, 1/577

belonged to the Muslims[1]. In Siyar A'lām An-Nubalā[2], Adh-Dhahabi mentioned in the stories he mentioned about 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubarāk that 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubarāk borrowed a pen from somebody in Ash-Shām and he wanted to return it, but he forgot. When he arrived to Khurasān, which is the eastern part of Irān, the pen was still with him. Look at the distance between Khurasān and Bilād Ash-Shām. He returned to Bilād Ash-Shām to give it back to its owner. And there are plenty of other similar examples in the stories of the *Salaf*. *Wara'* brings peace of mind and cleans the heart just like one cleans his own clothes.

[1] Ḥilyat Al-Awliyāʾ wa-Ṭabaqāt Al-Aṣfiyāʾ, Ṭ. as-Saʿādah, 5/326

[2] Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, Ṭ. Al-Risālah, 8/395; Ṭ. Dār Al-Ḥadīth, 7/374

Zuhd

We spoke about *Wara'*, and now *Zuhd* is a level above *Wara'* on the path to Allāh ﷻ. Like *Wara'*, *Zuhd* is a level in the pursuit of achieving nearness to Allāh ﷻ. The meaning of *Zuhd* is all throughout the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* and it was something implemented in the lives of the *Salaf*. For example, verses that warn about *Dunyā* are verses about *Zuhd*. Verses warning in one way or another about those whom the *Dunyā* has deceived are verses about *Zuhd*. *Zuhd* was defined by some as a form of detachment from *Dunyā* matters except for what's essential. It's to have a short-lived hope for *Dunyā* in one's heart. It's to always remember that *Dunyā* is a temporary journey.

Contrary to what many think, you don't have to be eating stale bread or living in a desert or wearing a rough cloak in order to be a *Zāhid*. *Zuhd* is not just about avoiding luxurious lifestyles while desiring them in your heart, because *Zuhd* is detachment from *Dunyā* in one's heart. Az-Zuhri said about *Zuhd* that it's when one doesn't let permissible things distract him from his path to Allāh ﷻ. And don't understand that only poor people can have *Zuhd*. Ibn Taymiyyah clearly addressed that. He said, "*Zuhd* can exist alongside wealth as well as poverty, because some of the early *Salaf* were *Zuhhād* even though they were wealthy."[1] Imām Ahmad explained how a rich man can have *Zuhd*. He said, "A person who does not experience joy in abundance of wealth or sadness in its scarcity is regarded as a *Zāhid*."[2]

Part of *Zuhd* is not coveting other people's wealth. It's being detached from what you see people have. *Zuhd* means trusting what Allāh ﷻ has in store for you more than the trust you have for what's in your own hands. When you face a hardship or a loss, *Zuhd* means that you should hope for the reward from Allāh ﷻ and accept it more than if that hardship never happened. *Zuhd* is disdain for worldly matters and looking down on them. There are many meanings of *Zuhd* that you'll find in the

[1] Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā, T. Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 11/28

[2] Madārij as-Sālikīn, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 1/463; Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 2/108

early books. Ibn Taymiyyah's definition of *Zuhd* was a distinct one, just like his comparison between *Zuhd* and *Wara'*. Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "I heard Shaykh Al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah say *Zuhd* is the abandonment of what doesn't benefit one in the *Ākhirah*."[1] He said *Wara'* — which was our previous topic — is the avoidance of what one fears may cause him harm in the *Ākhirah*.

Wara' represents a stage that proceeds *Zuhd* and it leads up to it. It serves as a preliminary phase on the path to achieving *Zuhd*, and it functions like an introduction to *Zuhd*. So simply put, what Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ is saying is *Wara'* is leaving what may harm you in the *Ākhirah*. *Zuhd* is leaving what doesn't benefit you in the *Ākhirah*. With *Zuhd*, it's not only the *Harām* and the *Makrūh* and the doubtful matters or what leads up to them that you're leaving — that's *Wara'*, that's our previous topic. *Zuhd*, you're a step above that. Now you're leaving some of the *Mubāh,* even if it doesn't harm your *Ākhirah*, to focus more on the *Ākhirah*.

A person who is a *Zāhid* and decides to leave what's *Mubāh* to concentrate on their *Ākhirah* is usually already far away from the *Harām*, that's why every believer who has *Zuhd* has *Wara'*, but not every believer who has *Wara'* has *Zuhd*, and there are complete books written on this topic. Ibn Al-Mubārak wrote about it, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal wrote about it, Ar-Rāzi wrote about it, Ibn Abi Ad-*Dunyā* wrote about it, Al-Bayhaqi and Ibn Abi 'Āsim and others wrote about this very essential, important topic, because our Messenger ﷺ was *Azhad An-Nās*; he was the most detached person from *Dunyā* matters.

He showed the least desire for *Dunyā* matters. He was content with just the basic essentials. 'Umar رضي الله عنه cried when he saw him lying on a reed mat that made its marks on his side, ﷺ. He cried when he saw that among the few items that were in his house, in his room, were a few handfuls of barley in the corner of the room. When the Messenger ﷺ saw him crying, he said, "What's wrong, 'Umar?" He said, "The mat left its marks on your

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 2/12; Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 2/219

side and all you have is a few things. Qaysar and Kisrā, the empires of the time, they live among fruits and rivers." The Messenger ﷺ said,

يَا ابْنَ الْخَطَّابِ أَلَا تَرْضَى أَنْ تَكُونَ لَنَا الْآخِرَةُ، وَلَهُمُ الدُّنْيَا؟

O Son of Khattāb! Does it not please you that the Ākhirah is for us and the Dunyā is for them?[1]

He lived a simple life by choice, not by force. He said ﷺ once, "If I had a mountain like Uhud of gold, it would not please me that any of it would stay with me more than three days."[2] He would give it out for the sake of Allāh ﷻ within less than three days, except a portion that he would keep to pay off his debt, except a very essential portion. That's *Zuhd*. He was the most honoured of all creation, yet he lived a simple life, even though the world was at his fingertips. Even though if he wanted, Allāh ﷻ would have turned mountains into gold and silver for him.

The *Sahābah* after him, who learned from him, they had *Zuhd* in their lives. They showed a great detachment from *Dunyā*, they lived simply. Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ, he told the people of his time — he was addressing the *Tābi'īn*, the best generation after the *Sahābah* — He said "You fast more, you pray more, you strive harder than the *Sahābah*, but they were better than you!" They said, "Abu 'Abd Ar-Rahmān," — his *Kunyā* was Abu 'Abd Ar-Rahmān — they said, "Why Abu 'Abd Ar-Rahmān? Why were they better than us?" He said,

كَانُوا أَزْهَدَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَأَرْغَبَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْكُمْ

They were more detached from this Dunyā. They were more eager for the Ākhirah.[3]

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[1] Sahih Muslim 1479

[2] Sahih Al-Bukhari 2389

[3] Az-Zuhd li-Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1/115

The *Sahābah* turned away from the fleeting pleasures of this *Dunyā*, even though those pleasures were very close to them. They understood that everything in this *Dunyā* is temporary, and the only thing that lasts was their good deeds. They succeeded in keeping the *Dunyā* in their hands, not in their hearts. Al-Asbahāni[1] and As-Suyūti[2] — just to give you an example — and Ibn Al-Mubārak[3] and others mentioned the story about ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb ﷺ. He put 400 *Dīnār* in a pouch and he told his servant, “Take this pouch to Abu ‘Ubaydah. Tell him, ‘This is for your needs’, and wait to see what he does with it.” The servant delivered the money and the message to Abu ‘Ubaydah ﷺ. Abu ‘Ubaydah ﷺ made *Du’ā* for ‘Umar ﷺ and immediately told his maid to divide it among people in charity. It was all completely distributed to poor people.

The servant returned to ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb ﷺ, he told him what he saw. ‘Umar ﷺ had already prepared another pouch with 400 *Dīnār* for Mu’ādh ﷺ. He said, “Take this pouch to Mu’ādh. Tell him, ‘This is for your needs’, and see what he does with it.” He delivered the pouch and the message, Mu’ādh ﷺ made *Du’ā* for ‘Umar, then he instructed his maid to divide it among certain people in charity. When Mu’ādh’s wife saw this, she said, “We’re poor! Give us something!” There were only two *Dīnār*s left in the pouch that he gave to his wife. The servant told ‘Umar ﷺ what Mu’ādh ﷺ did, and that’s when ‘Umar said,

إِنَّهُمْ إِخْوَةٌ، بَعْضُهُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ

They’re brothers to one another!

It was reported that Mu’āwiyah ﷺ gave Ā’ishah ﷺ 100,000 *Dirhams*, and by the end of the day she had distributed all of it. Her

[1] Ḥilyat Al-Awliyāʾ wa-Ṭabaqāt Al-Aṣfiyāʾ, Ṭ. Maṭbaʿat as-Saʿādah, 1/237

[2] Jamʿ Al-Jawāmiʿ Al-Maʿrūf bi-’Al-Jāmiʿ Al-Kabīr, Ṭ. Al-Azhar ash-Sharīf, 16/189

[3] az-Zuhd wa-ar-Raqāʾiq li-Ibn Al-Mubārak, 1/178

servant told her, "Why didn't you buy us some meat with just one of those *Dirhams*?"[1] In Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, 'Umar ﷺ, who led the globe of his time, reaches Bilād Ash-Shām in honour with the *Izār*, *Khuffān*, and *Imāmah*, leading his own camel in the water. The soldiers approached him, they said, "*Amīr Al- Muʾminīn*, you're meeting troops and leaders like this?" 'Umar ﷺ said his famous quote,

إِنَّا قَوْمٌ أَعَزَّنَا اللَّهُ بِالْإِسْلَامِ...

We are a people whom Allāh *has* honour*ed through Islam…*[2]

If you chase this *Dunyā*, it will hurt your *Ākhirah*, and if you chase the *Ākhirah*, it will hurt your *Dunyā*, so prioritize what lasts over what is temporary. Again, focusing on *Dunyā*, solely on *Dunyā*, will negatively impact your *Ākhirah*. Focusing solely on the *Ākhirah* may negatively impact your *Dunyā*. It's essential to prioritize what's eternal, which is the *Ākhirah*, over what's fleeting, which is this *Dunyā*. Prioritize what lasts over what's temporary.

Zuhd in this *Dunyā* is a path to salvation in the *Ākhirah*. Abu Dawud said, "I used to sit with Imām Ahmad ﷺ, and his gatherings were gatherings only about the *Ākhirah*." He said, "I never heard him talk about anything related to this *Dunyā*."[3] *Zuhd* is a state that many individuals may not achieve, but they may gain entry into *Jannah*. However, attaining the highest ranks of *Jannah* necessitates a significant degree of *Zuhd*. To reach the status of the *Siddiqīn* and *Shuhadā'* and *Sālihīn*, one must cultivate a profound level of *Zuhd*.

This brings to light a matter that's not often discussed, and it relates to the *Zuhd* of *Talabat Al-'Ilm* and *Ulamā'* — specifically about *Talabat*

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[1] Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, Ṭ. Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 2/187; Ṭ. Dār Al-Ḥadīth, 3/458

[2] Al-Muṣannaf li-Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ṭ. Maktabat ar-Rushd, 7/10, āthār no. 33847; Ṭ. Dār Kunūz Ishbīliyā, 19/76, āthār no. 36114.

[3] Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, Ṭ. Al-Risālah, 11/199

Al-'Ilm and *Ulamā'*. It's not talked about often when *Zuhd* is addressed. *Ulamā'* and *Mujāhidīn* need a high degree of *Zuhd*. How can you truly please Allāh ﷻ with your words and actions when you're accepting huge amounts of money or grants or gifts from *Tawāghīt*, or living in luxurious mansions provided by them, or traveling with diplomatic passports provided by them, or receiving endless perks from them? Assume they were legitimate *Shar'ī* leaders, real *Khulafā'* and *Umarā'*. An *'Ālim* and *Tālib 'Ilm* must not only have *Zuhd* not to ask them for anything, but he must have *Zuhd* not to accept anything. That's when they're righteous *Umarā'* and *Khulafā'*! Imagine when it's *Tawāghīt* spreading *Fasād* and *Kufr* on this Earth. The *Dunyā* benefits that you gain from them will also negatively affect your *Dīn.* There's a cost for what you get from them, and it impacts your *Dīn.* It's not just from rulers — from anyone!

A *Tālib 'Ilm* and an *'Ālim* and a *Mujāhid* should have *Zuhd* from what Islamic centres, business, and businessmen offer to gift or grant. People exhibit generosity when they hold affection for an *'Ālim*. One can obtain substantial wealth by accepting contributions provided by the congregation. Being an *'Ālim*, as I've always said, is among the biggest money makers of our time. A true *'Ālim* and a true *Tālib 'Ilm* who aspires to please Allāh ﷻ must embody *Zuhd* from material possessions that they're offered.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُواْ...﴿ ٱلسَّجْدَة : ٢٤﴾

And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient… (as-Sajdah:24)

They became Imāms, when they're patient. Yes, patient means afflictions, but Qatādah also said,

لَمَّا صَبَرُوا عَنِ الدُّنْيَا

When they showed patience regarding Dunyā.[1]

Patience means when they hold back and refrain from worldly pleasures and pursuits. They became Imāms when they were *Zuhhād* in this *Dunyā*. That's the quality of who?

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً...

And We made from among them leaders…

The quality of the true Imāms. Sufyān said,

لَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّجُلِ أَنْ يَكُونَ إِمَامًا يُقتَدى بِهِ حَتَّى يَتَحَامَى عَنِ الدُّنْيَا

A man should not serve as an Imām until he distances himself from worldly pursuits.[2]

Zuhd for a *Tālib 'Ilm* and a *Mujāhid* and An *'Ālim* is also *Zuhd* in what people say about you. *Zuhd* signifies that their admiration and criticism of you falls with equal weight on you. If you're concerned about their opinion about you while you're on the *Haqq*, you haven't even started on the path of *Zuhd* yet. *Zuhd* signifies letting go of the yearning for acknowledgement from others. Even if it's merely a feeling within the heart. *Zuhd* refers to the idea of not being concerned with getting followers or becoming famous. If you're concerned about gaining followers, whether it's virtually or in real life, you still haven't reached the status of *Zuhd*, you haven't even started on that path yet. *Zuhd* from seeking praise and the desire for leadership is more challenging and more crucial than *Zuhd* from other worldly affairs.

This high level of *Zuhd* that's required for *Talabat Al-'Ilm* can only be achieved by those who sincerely dedicate their hearts to Allāh ﷻ and those who seek to please Allāh ﷻ. When you're doing *Da'wah* for a pay

[1] Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 6/331; Ṭ. Dār Ṭayyibah, 6/371

[2] Ibid.

check, you haven't even started on the path of *Zuhd*. Tailoring your talks on the account of speaking the *Haqq* and standing for the oppressed to make yourself appealing for invitations from *Masājid*, that undermines *Zuhd*. Giving up on *Dunyā* or fame or followers because you can't achieve it and it hasn't been made available to you, that's very simple and it's easy and everyone can do it. *Zuhd* comes into play when the *Dunyā* comes to a person willingly, but then he turns away from it, choosing to let it go because he desires what's with Allāh ﷻ.

The prevalence of corrupt Fatwas, the unfortunate positions adopted by *Ulamā'* and *Talabat Al-'Ilm* today, and the spread of *Irjā'* can largely be attributed to a deficiency in *Zuhd*. When an individual embodies *Zuhd*, they turn down the enticing opportunities and offers presented by Ibn Zāyed and Ibn Salmān.

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ﴿ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ : ١٦ ﴾

Nay, you prefer the life of this world, (al-ʾAʿlā:16)

وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ ﴿ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ : ١٧ ﴾

Although the Hereafter is better and more lasting. (al-ʾAʿlā:17)

You prefer the life of this world over the *Ākhirah*, and the *Ākhirah* is better and more lasting. Qatādah said, "People choose this *Dunyā* over the *Ākhirah* except those whom Allāh ﷻ has bestowed mercy over."[1] We've met *Shuyūkh*, or so-called "*Shuyūkh*", who constantly requested incentives, cash, houses, mansions, and buildings. They kept asking and asking, and as long as they were okay with being treated like toilet paper for the rulers, they received what they wanted. And we also saw so-called "*Shuyūkh*" who wouldn't ask, but they would accept what was given to them. And by Allāh, we saw and met *Shuyūkh* who, despite the world's

[1] Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr fī at-Tafsīr bil-Maʾthūr, Ṭ. Dār Al-Fikr, 8/487

temptations, chose to decline everything that was presented to them and only sought the reward from Allāh ﷻ.

Zuhd makes you live like a king! No one but the King of Kings controls you when you have *Zuhd*. Among the benefits of *Zuhd* for everyone is living an honourable and noble life, like you're a king. Someone asked Muhammad Ibn Wās'i for advice. He said, "Be a king in the *Dunyā* and the *Ākhirah*." He said, "How? How do I become a king?" He said, "By having *Zuhd* in this *Dunyā*."[1] You live honourable with *Zuhd* in this *Dunyā*. You attain happiness and peace of mind in this *Dunyā* with *Zuhd*. You attain purity of the heart with *Zuhd*. *Zuhd* removes envy and malice from the heart, because you don't care, you don't want what other people have. *Zuhd* makes you love your Muslim brothers and sisters as you should. It removes jealousy. Most importantly, you attain the highest ranks of *Jannah* with *Zuhd*.

Let's conclude quickly with just a few pointers on how to attain *Zuhd*. One of the biggest matters that helps a believer attain *Zuhd* and detach his heart from *Dunyā* desires is remembering the reality of this *Dunyā*. When you realize

...وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا مَتَـٰعُ ٱلْغُرُورِ﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان : ١٨٥﴾

The life of this world is nothing but a deceptive enjoyment.
(Āli ʿImrān:185)

When you realize that, when a believer realizes

مَا عِندَكُمْ يَنفَدُ وَمَا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ بَاقٍۗ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل : ٩٦﴾

Whatever you have will end, but what Allāh has is lasting. (an-Naḥl:96)

When a believer realizes that this *Dunyā* is temporary and all *Dunyā* pleasures will eventually fade away, they become less attached to it and

[1] Az-Zuhd li-Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1/72, Āthār no. 134

more focused on the everlasting life. Remembering death attains *Zuhd*. Individuals who often contemplate death will find contentment and satisfaction in the most simplest things. The more a believer is reminded of the afterlife, the more he's worried about it, the more it becomes his concern, the less the allure of this *Dunyā* affects him. How can a believer not have *Zuhd* in this *Dunyā* when the Messenger ﷺ illustrated the insignificance of this *Dunyā* in sayings and in actions? He emphasized that the only true life is the everlasting life of the *Ākhirah*. He ﷺ said,

اللَّهُمَّ !لَا عَيشَ إِلَّا عَيشُ الآخِرَهْ

O Allāh! There's no life except the life of the Ākhirah.[1]

That's the only life, the real life. Contemplating the *Qur'ān* attains *Zuhd*. So many verses in the *Qur'ān*. The *Qur'ān* is full of warnings about the temporary nature of this *Dunyā*. The *Qur'ān* highlights the lowliness of this *Dunyā* and how quickly it fades away. The *Qur'ān* encourages us to focus on the everlasting life, the true life, the *Ākhirah*.

A sign that Allāh ﷻ loves you and wants good for you is that he places in your heart that which helps you see the true nature of the *Dunyā* and the *Ākhirah*, and with that you prioritize the life that truly matters. A single verse of the so many verses on *Zuhd* is sufficient to raise your level of *Zuhd* and serve as a warning not to get to attached to the temporary pleasures that don't last in this *Dunyā*.

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِۦٓ أَزْوَٰجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿ طه : ١٣١﴾

And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them, the splendour of the life of this

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6413

world, that We may test them thereby. But the provision (good reward in the Hereafter) of your Lord is better and more lasting. (Ṭāʾ Hāʾ:131)

Allāh ﷻ tells His Messenger, don't let your eyes crave what we allowed some of the disbelievers to enjoy in this *Dunyā*. Don't crave it. But why not? The end of the verse tells you why you shouldn't crave that.

...وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿ طه : ١٣١﴾

But the provision (good reward in the Hereafter) of your Lord is better and more lasting. (Ṭāʾ Hāʾ:131)

The reward of Allāh ﷻ is, number one *khayr*; it's better, *abqā*; it's everlasting.

Secret Deeds with Allāh

A way to prepare for the *Ākhirah* is by having secret deeds with Allāh ﷻ. Secret deeds with Allāh ﷻ elevate one's status in the *Ākhirah*, they wipe away the sins, and they help one overcome hardships in this *Dunyā*. The Messenger ﷺ said,

إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ العَبْدَ التَّقِيَّ الغَنِيَّ الخَفِيَّ

Allāh loves the servant who is God-conscious, free from want, and is hidden (from the view of people).[1]

Allāh ﷻ loves those who are *Al-Khafīyy*. Among those that he loves is *Al-Khafīyy*. Allāh ﷻ loves those who don't seek attention for their *'Ibādāt*. He loves people who prefer their good deeds to go unnoticed in this *Dunyā*. Having some *'Ibādāt* that you do in secrecy is a sign of sincerity and it's a reflection of deep *Īmān*. The hypocrites, liars, and pretenders can't have secret *'Ibādāt*, because it's something they can't do since their *'Ibādāt* are an act for show off. A true believer cherishes his private moments with Allāh ﷻ by engaging in secret acts of *'Ibādah* that please Allāh ﷻ, just like wrong doers enjoy their time alone to indulge in sinful behaviour, *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*.

Secret acts of *'Ibādah* could be charities, it could be *Salāh* during the day in your house, or *Qiyām* at night while everyone's sleeping. Some of the *Salaf* didn't even let their spouses know about their portion in *Qiyām Al-Layl*. It could be a *Harām* glance that you turned away from. No one knows about you lowering your gaze except Allāh ﷻ. If you're walking with a group, they might not even notice you're lowering your gaze. Or if you look at *Harām*, the only one who will know if you looked at the *Harām* or looked away from it is Allāh ﷻ, so that's a hidden, secret deed. You have a phone and you have social media, no one knows if you turned away from a *Harām* glance while you're browsing social media in the

[1] Sahih Muslim 2965

darkness of your room except Allāh ﷻ. No one knows if you made an effort to steer clear of *Harām* content on social media except Allāh ﷻ.

Secret *'Ibādāt* could be fasting, could be *Dhikr*, could be *Du'ā*, could be helping brothers or sisters, or defending them. It could be helping orphans, or prisoners, or paying off debts. One of the most honourable acts of *'Ibādah* that can be kept discreet, especially in today's world, is virtual *Da'wah* to Allāh ﷻ. Sharing pure *Tawhīd*, standing up for the righteous who passed away or those who are in prison. No one but Allāh ﷻ knows if you used your username or your screen name — that screen name and username that no one knows about but Allāh ﷻ — no one knows if you used it to spread *Tawhīd* and defend the *Muwahiddīn* except Allāh ﷻ.

Giving *Da'wah* quietly and unknown, away from the distractions of fame and attention, is among the best forms of secret *'Ibādah*. We encountered numerous brothers who dedicated significant efforts to *Da'wah*, spreading knowledge about Allāh ﷻ, and sisters often surpassed the brothers in this regard. Rarely anyone knows who they are, but Allāh ﷻ definitely knows them. Be one of the unsung heroes who are recognized in the heavens with their deeds, but their deeds remain unknown to people on this vanishing earth. In Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, under the verse,

ٱدْعُواْ رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ
﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف : ٥٥﴾

Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors. (al-ʾAʿrāf-55)

Ibn Kathīr mentioned a quote by Al-Hasan Al-Basri. Al-Hasan Al-Basri was of course from the *Tābi'īn*. He's talking about the *Sahābah*. He mentioned that he met people, meaning the *Sahābah*, who never performed any act of *'Ibādah* in public that they were able to do in

private.[1] Now, people blast their *'Ibādāt* on social media and brag and bolster about them in gatherings. Hidden *'Ibādāt* are a sign of true *Īmān*.

Not only is it a sign of *Īmān*, not only does it increase *Īmān*, but from the greatest secrets of hidden acts of *'Ibādah* is that you will experience a profound sweetness in your *Īmān* and in your *'Ibādah*. If your *'Ibādah* and *Īmān* lack sweetness, flavour it by performing concealed *'Ibādāt* between you and Allāh ﷻ. Secret *'Ibādāt* kill *Riyā'* and show-off. Those who struggle with *Riyā'* and show-off or the doubts of that — those who doubt any of that, they'll find their cure in performing secret *'Ibādāt*. The more concealed *'Ibādāt* are, the more truthful they are. Hypocrites and people of *Riyā'*, people who like to show off, they do *'Ibādāt* to be seen by others. They seek praise and admiration while the faithful, sincere individuals perform their *'Ibādāt* for the sake of Allāh ﷻ alone, concealing their *'Ibādāt* and their deeds from the eyes of creation as much as they can, because they want their reward from Allāh ﷻ alone.

Those who struggled with the thought of *Riyā'*, they often struggle with the thought of *Riyā'* because their private acts of *'Ibādah* are minimal or non-existent. If someone is spotted praying two *Rak'āt* in public and he starts to feel unsure about his intention as it pertains to *Riyā'*, but then he goes in his house and prays many more *Nawāfil* that no one knows about, or he spends hours in *Qiyām* at night without anyone noticing, those two *Rak'āt* that he did in public wouldn't make him doubt their sincerity since what he's done in private is far greater. If someone is seen giving two dollars in public in charity, but in secrecy he's giving thousands more that no one knows about, he will not have *Riyā'* or thoughts or whispers about it, because in secrecy, he's giving much more than what he's giving in public. Whatever *'Ibādah* you're seen doing in public, purify that *'Ibādah* by doing that *'Ibādah* or other *'Ibādāt* in private many more times than you do openly in public. Remember that just like there can be show-off, which is *Riyā'*, in public *'Ibādāt*, one must

[1] Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 3/384; Ṭ. Dār Ṭayyibah, 3/428

be careful not to fall into *'Ujb* in private *'Ibādāt*, which is vanity or self-conceit or self-admiration — and that's a long topic, it's not our topic today, it's a long other topic.

Another reason for secret *'Ibādāt* is that secret *'Ibādāt* are a foundation of steadfastness on the truth. Secret *'Ibādāt* act like a strong shield for the heart against the potential for a relapse in one's faith. The more deeds that you have that are hidden, the stronger your *Īmān* becomes and the more Allāh ﷻ places light in your heart to see through the dark *Fitan* when they occur. Secret *'Ibādāt* will, by the will of Allāh ﷻ, protect you from inconsistencies and *Dhalāl* that others experience during times of *Fitan*. Don't expect *Thabāt* during times of *Fitan* without dedicating some private *'Ibādah* between yourself and Allāh ﷻ. You'll also see the effect of such private *'Ibādāt* during your personal trials as well. One will not have *Sabr* during periods of personal *Ibtilā'āt*, like losses of loved ones or losses of wealth or loss of freedom — you won't have *Sabr* without a substantial record of private acts of *'Ibādah* between yourself and Allāh ﷻ.

Build the largest collection of secret *'Ibādāt* that you can, that only you and Allāh ﷻ know about. You'll be firm in times of *Ibtilā'āt*, whether it's personal matters or matters pertaining to the *Dīn.* With secret *'Ibādāt* and *Du'ā* for guidance, you will perceive the virtuous *Muwahiddīn Mujāhidīn* as just, and you'll recognize the truth during *Fitan* with the utmost clarity, while others with no private bond with Allāh ﷻ will be struggling with confusion and they may oppose the most righteous people of their time. Take this as a rule: the more hidden your *'Ibādāt* are, the stronger your *Īmān* becomes, the more steadfastness and insight you will have during personal or *Dīn* related trials and *Fitan*.

Concealed *'Ibādāt* resemble a stake that you hit into the ground, it's like a stake that's embedded into the ground. The further you drive the stake down, the more secure it remains above the surface. And likewise, the deeper your deeds are buried, the stronger your *Īmān* stands during trials. The strength of that stake comes in how much you conceal of it

underground. The strength of your *Īmān* and *Thabāt* comes in how much you conceal of your sincere *'Ibādāt*.

Many of those who strayed away from the right path, they didn't actually change. They were always lost and misguided. It's just that their true hidden nature came to light. You think they changed, but all that happened was that the hidden side of them that lacked true *'Ibādah*, that became visible. It over- shadowed their fake, seemingly righteous front. That's like one of these beautiful trees that you see, any one of these. It may appear lovely on the outside, but if you inspect it closely, you might find that it's decayed within. A breeze could cause it to topple. An individual may seem outwardly virtuous, however, without sincere, private *'Ibādāt*, they're likely to collapse like the decayed tree at their first trial or difficulty or their first challenge in life.

And there's also a significant amount of special *Ajr* for concealed *'Ibādāt*. Allāh ﷻ commanded the concealed *'Ibādāt*.

إِن تُبْدُواْ ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِن تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا ٱلْفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ...﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة : ٢٧١﴾

If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you… (al-Baqarah:271)

If you conceal your *Sadaqah*, its better for you. That's similar to the meaning in the *Hadīth* about the Seven that Allāh ﷻ will shade them *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah*,

وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ بِصَدَقَةٍ فَأَخْفَاهَا حَتَّى لَا تَعْلَمَ شِمَالُهُ مَا صَنَعَتْ يَمِينُهُ

A man who gives in charity in secrecy. In so much secrecy, that his left hand doesn't know what his right hand has given.[1]

In the same *Hadīth*,

وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ

A person who remembers Allāh in seclusion and his eyes get flooded with tears.

Allāh ﷻ commended a person who remembers Allāh ﷻ in solitude and then his eyes tear up. How does he remember Allāh ﷻ? *Khāliyan* — alone — our topic today. Shedding a simple tear or having a watery eye when remembering Allāh ﷻ alone is better than weeping profusely in public. *Qiyām Al-Layl* was praised for being late at night when no one knows about it.

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ ٱلَّيْلِ هِىَ أَشَدُّ وَطْـًٔا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ﴿ٱلْمُزَّمِّل : ٦﴾

Verily, the rising by night (for Tahajjud prayer) is very hard and most potent and good for governing oneself, and most suitable for (understanding) the Word (of Allāh). (al-Muzzammil:6)

And Allāh ﷻ said,

وَمِنَ ٱلَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِۦ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ...﴿ ٱلْإِسْرَاء : ٧٩﴾

And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Qur'ān] as additional [worship] for you... (Al-Isrā':79)

Fasting is among the best deeds because it's a deed only Allāh ﷻ knows about. Hidden deeds also refine and purify the heart from impurities and darkness. When matters get tough, you use those deeds in

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6806

Wasīlah, like the story of the three men in the famous *Hadīth* who were blocked by a rock and they sought a pure deed that will help them escape from the cave, and I mentioned it and talked about it in detail last *Ramadān*.

Ibn Al-Qayyim also mentioned that concealed deeds, the hidden deeds, grant one acceptance and a positive praise in this *Dunyā*. Even though that should not be intended, one of the effects of hidden deeds is that Allāh ﷻ blesses that person with acceptance and positive praise in this *Dunyā*.[1]

Muhammad Ibn Wāsi' said, "Whoever rectifies his inner-self," like in private *'Ibādāt*, "Allāh ﷻ will rectify his outward appearance."[2] Ibn Al-Qayyim[3] said, in meaning and in summary, that a person who hides a deed between himself and Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will make that deed appear on him to others. He said those with a strong bond with Allāh ﷻ, who concealed their *'Ibādāt*, are people who are spoken about positively to the point that their sins and faults are forgotten and people will only mention good things about them. Why? Because he said Allāh ﷻ does not overlook the efforts of his servants. The hearts of the pure, righteous people — the hearts of the pure, righteous, not everyone — can sense the true state of an individual based on the person's secret relationship with Allāh ﷻ. Allāh will put it in their heart that this is a righteous person. Ibn Taymiyyah used to go to abandoned *Masājid* and bury his face in the dirt and make *Du'ā* to Allāh ﷻ

يَا مُعَلِّمَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَلِّمْنِي

[1] ar-Risālah at-Tabūkīyah (Zād al-Muhājir ilā Rabbih), Ṭ. ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm, 1/92 (Similar in meaning; exact quote not found)

[2] Attributed to Muhammad Ibn Wāsi'; primary source was not located

[3] Attributed to Ibn Al-Qayyim; primary source was not located

O Teacher of Ibrāhīm! Grant me understanding! [1]

He made *Du'ā* to gain knowledge, and he would make *Du'ā* to understand a single verse of the *Qur'ān* after reading over a hundred Tafsīrs on that verse. He would make *Du'ā* for Allāh ﷻ to guide him to the understanding of that verse. Where would he do that? In an abandoned *Masjid*. Why? Because they're honourable Houses of Allāh, and no one is there, they're abandoned. That's how you attain sweetness in *'Ibādah*. It could have been one of those times that he spent in solitude making *Du'ā* in a deserted *Masjid* — it could have been one of those times that Allāh ﷻ granted him the incredible knowledge and high status that he's been recognized for over the centuries. If you don't have a record of hidden good deeds, you're missing out on sweetness in *'Ibādah*, and you're far away from the most important matters that help you stay strong for your *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. If you need help performing secret *'Ibādāt*, seek Allāh ﷻ's aid for it, because He said,

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿ ٱلْفَاتِحَة : ٥﴾

You alone we worship and You alone we seek Your Aid. (al-Fātiḥah:5)

Seek His Aid to worship Him.

[1] Al-ʿUqūd al-Durriyyah fī Manāqib Ibn Taymiyyah li Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm, 1/38; Ṭ. Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, 1/42

Secret Sins

After our talk on hidden deeds, we'll move on to the complete opposite, which are hidden or secret sins. We said, in the last talk, that secret deeds serve as a foundation and a cornerstone for steadfastness on this *Dīn.* This topic is the opposite of that. Secret sins can lead to a person's relapse in their faith, just like good deeds can help one remain steadfast. Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "Those knowledgeable about Allāh ﷻ unanimously agree that hidden sins are the root cause of spiritual setbacks."[1] The gauge to your faith is in your hidden actions. The true measure of your faith and the extent of your love of Allāh ﷻ and your reverence for Him is not determined by the public prayers nor by your recitation of the *Qur'ān* in front of others nor by your charitable acts that are displayed before everyone to see. The true gauge of your faith lies in your private moments when you're all alone, when you're alone and away from the gaze of everyone. If you're tempted to sin but you choose to refrain for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, that's a testament to the strength of your *Īmān* and your love of Allāh ﷻ. If you yield to temptation and you disobey Allāh ﷻ, it indicates weakness in your faith.

Amongst the biggest of all losers are those who show people their good deeds and then battle Allāh ﷻ with hidden sins, and He's closer to them than their jugular veins. There are some — may Allāh ﷻ save us all from this — when you see them in public, they're like the *Awliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ. They'll prolong their *Salāh*, they'll focus in their *Salāh*, it'll be on time, they're involved in charity work and in helping others, they'll help at the *Masjid*, they'll display books to show that they're serious students of *'Ilm*, but when no one is watching, they'll skip *Salāh*, they'll delay it, they might be mindless in it, or they'll rush through it. They'll spend time listening and watching and saying that which is forbidden, they'll gossip and slander on social media under fake usernames thinking

[1] Attributed to Ibn Al-Qayyim; primary source was not located

that nobody will know who they are, forgetting that Allāh ﷻ is watchful over everything they do.

Sahnūn said, "Don't be a friend of Allāh ﷻ in public while being his enemy in private, and don't act like you're against the *Shaytān* and your *Nafs* and your desires and temptations openly, while in secrecy you're on their side."[1] In a *Masjid*, his behaviour and demeanour reflect the qualities of the *Salaf*, he interacts with his brothers in a manner that's reminiscent of the *Sahābah*. However, when he returns to his wife, mother, and children, and he's all alone in his house, he exhibits the conduct that's similar to that of Abu Jahl. In the presence of others, he pretends to avoid and avert his gaze from that which is prohibited, but when he's by himself, he indulges in what he's supposed to avoid.

أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ ۚ فَٱللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَن تَخْشَوْهُ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ...
﴿ هُود: ١٣﴾

Allāh has more right that you should fear him, if you are [truly] believers. (Hūd:13)

When Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ was asked about,

يَعْلَمُ خَآئِنَةَ ٱلْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِى ٱلصُّدُورُ

Allāh knows the fraud of the eyes, and all that the breasts conceal.

He explained it in a way that many can relate to. He said, "It's a man who walks into the house of his neighbour, friend, or relatives, and there's a pretty woman there or a pretty woman passes by. When his friends or relatives aren't paying attention, he sneaks a look at that woman. As soon as they notice or he thinks they're going to notice, he quickly looks away. When they get distracted again, he glances at that pretty woman again. When they're about to catch him, he turns his eyes away again." Ibn

[1] Attributed to Sahnūn; primary source was not located

‘Abbās says, “Allāh sees in his heart that he wishes he could see her private parts as well.”[1]

يَعْلَمُ خَآئِنَةَ ٱلْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِى ٱلصُّدُورُ

Allāh knows the fraud of the eyes, and all that the breasts conceal.

Yes, individuals around you who are vigilant may be unaware of what you see and do, but Allāh ﷻ knows the deception of the eyes and what the heart conceals.

يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَىٰ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْلِ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ١٠٨ ﴾

They may hide (their crimes) from men, but they cannot hide (them) from Allāh; for He is with them (by His Knowledge), when they plot by night in words that He does not approve. And Allāh *ever encompasses what they do. (An-Nisāʾ:108)*

They hide their sins from men, but they can’t hide their sins from Allāh ﷻ. Last *Ramadān* I spoke about the verse

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرَىٰ ﴿ ٱلْعَلَق: ١٤ ﴾

Does he not know that Allāh ﷻ sees everything? (al-ʿAlaq̈:14)

This is an essential topic, especially for *Talabat Al-’Ilm* and *Du’ā*t and the *Mujāhidīn.* He’s an absolute failure if he thinks he’s going to be an *‘Ālim* or a *Dā’iyyah* or a *Tālib ‘Ilm* or a *Mujāhid*, especially if he’s on the pure *Tawhīd*, while he’s persisting on committing private sins. They want to establish the most noble missions, yet in privacy they

[1] Al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bi’l-Maʾthūr, T. Dār al-Fikr, 7/282.

combat Allāh ﷻ with sins [like] looking at that which is prohibited, hearing that which is prohibited, slandering brothers and sisters under fake names for personal reasons, thinking that nobody will find out who they are and forgetting that Allāh ﷻ is watchful over them, playing with the minds of sisters in order to get them to fall in love with them so they can marry them without a Wali. Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "When you combat Allāh ﷻ with hidden sins, you will fall from his eyes."[1]

I frequently echo the words of Ibn Al-Jawzi on this matter, because most of our audience consists of brothers and sisters who are dedicated *Talabat 'Ilm In shā'* Allāh, and *In shā'* Allāh they're the future leaders of this Earth, or their descendants. So Ibn Al-Jawzi said, "I've seen many people who claim to attribute themselves to knowledge," — *Talabat 'Ilm*, *Ulamā'* — "yet they neglected how Allāh ﷻ sees them when they're alone, and because of that, their good reputation disappears in public. There's no joy in seeing them and no one looks forward to meeting them. Their presence feels like they're not even there."[2]

Hidden sins get one to lose his effectiveness in *Da'wah*, and it strips him of his reputation. Hidden sins strip the *Jihād* talk or speech or social media post or reminder from its effect, and that individual becomes despised by the people of the *Haqq*. One who's pinned down by the *Shaytān* can't fight an enemy. One who's own *Nafs* defeated him can't defeat a powerful enemy. In our previous discussion about hidden good deeds, we talked about how Allāh ﷻ will make those good deeds visible in a person's appearance, even though he didn't intend that. We also mentioned that this talk is the opposite of that one. Hidden sins can be visible in a person's appearance as well. Abu Ad-Dardā' ﷺ said, "A person should be careful not to be cursed by the hearts of the believers without even realizing it." They asked him how. He said, "When a servant

[1] Ṣayd al-Khāṭir, T. Dār al-Qalam, 1/207

[2] Ibid., 1/148

commits hidden sins with Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ places that person's hatred in the hearts of the believers, without him even being aware of that."[1]

How does one stop committing hidden sins? You turn to Allāh ﷻ in *Du'ā*. You ask Allāh ﷻ to keep you away from those hidden sins, and to protect you from them. We often mention *Du'ā* for various reasons, and as a result, people start to overlook the importance of *Du'ā* and underestimate it. Never underestimate *Du'ā*! Be genuine and persistent in your *Du'ā* and ask Allāh ﷻ to protect you from hidden sins, and *Wallāhi*, with sincere, truthful *Du'ā*, He will save you from it.

Don't spend time alone. They're called hidden sins because no one is around to see them, so don't be alone! That will be a means for you not to commit the sins. If you're married, be with your spouse. If you're not married, try to get married. I know many brothers and sisters who wanted to get married, and all the obstacles were there in front of them, there was no hope of them getting married. But they turned to Allāh ﷻ and asked Him to find a spouse for them, because they wanted to preserve themselves from *Harām*, and Allāh provided for them from ways they didn't even perceive. Be around people whose actions and presence remind you of the *Ākhirah*.

Battling your desires and resisting the whispers of the *Shaytān* as it pertains to this topic is among *Jihād* An- *Nafs*, and *Jihād An-Nafs* not only involves resisting temptations, but it's cutting off avenues that lead to private sins. Among the means is what we just mentioned — having some good companions around you. Or for example, if it's your phone that's causing you to commit hidden sins, *Wallāhi* it's worth getting rid of it. I casually asked a young brother recently — I said, "Why do you have an Apple iWatch and you already have an Apple iPhone? They pretty much do the same things and you have both of them with you." A dear brother and a relative and a *Dā'iyyah*, may Allāh ﷻ preserve him, gifted me an Apple Watch, and I rarely ever use it, because I don't have the need

[1] Ṣayd Al-Khāṭir, Ṭ. Dār Al-Qalam, 1/186

for it. I was impressed by this brother's answer. He mentioned that he needs his phone for important things, like communicating with his family and he needs it for work. But he said his phone was causing him to commit secret sins, hidden sins. He said it's the type of sins that many people normalize, like browsing social media, and browsing the internet, and seeing and hearing that which most people think is normal. He said, "Now I wear the watch and I make sure to keep my iPhone in a different room in the house. The phone stays in one room, and I take my watch with me wherever I go. That allows me to text and call my family and my workplace while the phone is somewhere else. I'd be too lazy to get out of bed and walk to another room just to grab my phone to do something that's *Harām*." And he said, "If I do walk to the other room and get my phone, by the time I get to my phone, the thoughts and whispers of the *Shaytān* would fade away."

Jihād of the *Nafs* means you have to do something to sever the means that are causing you to sin. Possessing the resources and means that continually lead one to sin, while at the same time asserting a desire to cease sinning, that's similar to a person surrounding himself with a large amount of flammable material next to a fire, then expressing concern about the potential of a major fire igniting. It's like someone who ties his hands and legs and dives into the water, saying he's going for a swim.

أَلْقَاهُ فِي الْيَمِّ مَكْتُوفًا، وَقَالَ لَهُ : إِيَّاكَ إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَبْتَلَّ بِالْمَاءِ.

He threw him into the sea bound, and said to him: 'Beware, beware of getting wet!

Ka'b Ibn Mālik ﷺ was a famous *Sahābi* whose story was briefly mentioned in *Sūrat At-Tawbah*, and he himself mentioned the details of it in a *Hadīth*[1]. He made a mistake and because of it he was abandoned and shunned by the Messenger ﷺ and the *Sahābah* and even his wife. He made a mistake, but *Īmān* settled deep into his heart. In the midst of his

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 4418

struggle, he never lost *Walā'* and *Barā'*. He was walking in the market during the midst of his struggle and a Nabati hands him a letter from a king that hated the Messenger ﷺ. The king of Ghassan wanted to use that opportunity to get back at the Messenger ﷺ. In the letter, he said, "It's been conveyed to us that your friend," meaning the Messenger ﷺ, "is subjecting you to cruelty and he has abandoned you. You're welcome to come to us, and we'll hold you in high honour." What does Ka'b ﷺ do? A man whose heart overflowed with love and *Walā'* to Allāh ﷻ and to the Messenger ﷺ, a man who learned his *Walā'* and *Barā'* from the Messenger ﷺ. It's a lengthy, incredible story with numerous lessons. But our point right now is that he did not place the king's letter in his filing cabinet or under his mattress in case he wants to accept the offer in the future. He cut off and eliminated an avenue to a sin. He called that letter a calamity and he incinerated the letter, the means to sin or potential *Kufr*. He incinerated that in the oven. Whatever is causing you to sin, part of the meaning of *Jihād An-Nafs* is to get rid of it and avoid it. Allāh ﷻ said,

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا۟ ٱلزِّنَىٰٓ...﴿ ٱلإِسْرَاء: ٣٢﴾

And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse... (Al-Isrā':32)

Don't go near *Zinā*. He didn't say don't commit *Zinā*. Pause a moment before considering the hidden sin, and remind yourself that you have the ability and resources to commit the sin. However, if you choose to abstain for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, recognize that this decision of turning away from the sin for the sake of Allāh ﷻ while being able to commit it, that transforms that sin into a deed by the most generous Allāh ﷻ. If we understand and truly believe that our body parts expose us and testify against us *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah*, we'll be mindful of our actions and we'll take precautions.

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿ ٱلنُّور: ٢٤﴾

On the Day their tongues, their hands and their legs will testify against them of what they used to do. (an-Nūr:24)

We need to be extremely careful not to fall victim to this significant testimony that comes from within us and from our own limbs. We should strive with all our strength to ensure that our body parts testify in our favour, not against us. And this can only be achieved by being conscious of Allāh ﷻ, and observing His commands in everything we do. To accomplish this, we must be cautious with all our body parts, especially when we're alone. The eye that one sinned with will testify, just like in the verse that I mentioned and in several other verses.

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا مَا جَآءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَـٰرُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿ فُصِّلَت: ٢٠﴾

Until, when they reach it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will testify against them of what they used to do. (Fuṣṣilat:20)

The hearing testifies as well. And the *Julūd* in this verse, some of the *Mufassirīn* said it's the private parts.[1] The private parts testify. Allāh ﷻ said,

ٱلْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰٓ أَفْوَٰهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَآ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿ يس: ٦٥﴾

[1] Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī: Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān, Ṭ. Dār Al-Tarbiyah wa Al-Turāth, 21/451; Ṭ. Dār Hajr, 20/406

That Day, We will seal over their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify about what they used to earn. (Yāʾ Sīn:65)

The limbs articulate what the tongues conceal regarding one's actions. If someone was told, "Your father or mother or community will know what you did in the secrecy of your room of *Harām*", that person will be in extreme distress. Imagine when it's the limbs exposing the secrets to Allāh ﷻ.

And remember Allāh's blessings over you. You're blessed with a house, a shelter, a room, yet you use that to disobey Allāh ﷻ in it. Food Allāh ﷻ nourishes you with is strength that you commit hidden sins with. A phone that Allāh ﷻ blessed you with is something you used to commit a sin with. The fingers, the eyes, the tongue that you're blessed with are used to commit a sin with. Take a moment to reflect before engaging in concealed sins, and remind yourself always of the consequences and adverse effects of hidden sins. Ask yourself, is it really worth it? Is it worth it, regarding Allāh ﷻ as the least significant of those who see you — fearing the door will open upon you and someone seeing you, but not fearing Allāh ﷻ? It causes you to lose your worth in the eyes of Allāh ﷻ. It's a means for a bad ending in this *Dunyā*. Are you willing to risk all that?

Ibn Rajab said, "A person dies in a bad status, because of hidden, secret sins that people did not see."[1] We said in the past that bad endings and relapse in one's faith is usually not a change as many people see it. It's only the secret life or the secret, inner misguidance that has always been there that surfaced. In a *Hadīth* also, that's commonly mentioned on this topic in Sunan Ibn Mājah[2], it's mentioned that hidden sins turn deeds into scattered dust. It hardens the heart and darkens the face. It dries the

[1] Jāmiʿ Al-ʿUlūm wa Al-Ḥikam, Ṭ. Dār Al-Salām, 1/180; Ṭ. Muʾassasat Al-Risālah, 1/172; Ṭ. Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1/151

[2] Sunan Ibn Majah 4245

eyes; you have eyes that don't tear at the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ combined with a hard heart. Hidden sins strip one of sweetness in *'Ibādah* and sweetness of *Īmān*. Hidden sins cause the loss of provision, the loss of *Rizq*, and then the lack of *Barakah* in *Rizq* that you have. It causes fear of people. It causes distress and depression. It disrupts your schedule and hinders your time management. It may cause Allāh ﷻ to expose you. It destroys the heart and sickens it to the point that a person will not see the effect of the sin nor will he see the effect of a deed. It disturbs and destroys one's state of mind that he will not see truth from evil. It makes the hearts of the true believers hate you. When you leave hidden sins, you attain *Taqwā*, and when you attain *Taqwā*, you attain the benefits of *Taqwā*, and among them is

...وَمَن يَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مَخْرَجًا ﴿ ٱلطَّلَاق: ٢﴾

And whoever fears Allāh - He will make for him a way out. (aṭ-Ṭalāq:2)

He'll make a way out for you from every difficulty and provide for you from ways you never imagined.

...وَمَن يَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مِنْ أَمْرِهِۦ يُسْرًا ﴿ ٱلطَّلَاق: ٤﴾

And whoever fears Allāh - He will make for him of his matter ease. (aṭ-Ṭalāq:4)

He'll make things easier for you. And just like hidden good deeds can be used as a *Wasīlah* in *Du'ā* as we mentioned, refraining from committing hidden, secret sins for the sake of Allāh ﷻ can also be used in the same manner. A poet summed it all up, and he said,

وإِذَا خَلَوْتَ بِرِيبَةٍ فِي ظُلْمَةٍ ، وَالنَفْسُ دَاعِيَةٌ إِلى الطُغْيَانِ

If you're in a darkness, alone with a sin, and you find your own Nafs inviting you to the sin,

فاسْتَحْيْ مِنْ نَظَرِ الإلَه وَقُلْ لَهَا ، إِنَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الظَّلاَمَ يَرَانِي

Then be ashamed of the Sight of Allāh, and tell your Nafs, "Indeed the one who created the darkness can see me."

Tabattul

Our topic, *Tabattul*, is a topic that really doesn't get much attention. But it's one of the important ranks for the forerunners on their journey to Allāh ﷻ. And the purpose of engaging in the discussions that we've been having — like this topic today or the related topics that we've been talking about — the purpose of that is to purify one's heart. It's similar to how you would use a mirror to adjust your outer, physical appearance. The topics that we've explored these meanings; they served as a reflection to enhance your inner self.

Tabattul is abstinence. It refers to a state of detachment in the context of *'Ibādah*. It signifies detachment from everything with complete devolution to Allāh ﷻ and turning towards him in Ibādah. It's the detachment of the heart from worldly beings. It's complete, deep love of Allāh ﷻ and an alignment with what draws one closer to Allāh ﷻ in what fulfils His pleasure. Allāh ﷻ told his Messenger,

...وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿ ٱلْمُزَّمِّل: ٨﴾

Devote yourself to Him with complete devotion. (al-Muzzammil:8)

So it's devotion, and it's not just devotion, it's complete, full devotion. The Messenger ﷺ was never unaware of *Tabattul*. He knew it. How do we know he knew it? It was evident when he was inspired to worship in *Ghār Hirā*, where he received the revelation and the mission. Allāh ﷻ still told him,

وَٱذْكُرِ ٱسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿ ٱلْمُزَّمِّل: ٨﴾

Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him wholeheartedly. (al-Muzzammil:8)

Even though he knew it. He was inspired of it, even before messagehood. Allāh ﷻ ordered him to do *Tabattul* even though he already

knew of it, to emphasize to the Messenger ﷺ to continue on that path, to continue doing it.

Tabattul is to be attached to Allāh ﷻ and to worship Him at all times until death.

وَٱعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ ٱلْيَقِينُ ﴿ ٱلْحِجْر: ٩٩﴾

And worship your Lord until the inevitable comes your way. (al-Ḥijr:99)

It's not to worship Allāh ﷻ until a person gets what he wants and then he stops. There's a difference between someone who serves another just for a payment and a return and someone who serves continuously, non-stop, out of loyalty, out of love, out of fear, or out of the combination of all of that. A hired worker, for example, the plumber or electrician that you bring to do the job for you, as soon as you pay him after he finishes his job, he's gone. A servant or a slave stays. *Tabattul* means you're a slave of Allāh ﷻ, so you dedicate your entire life to being a slave of Allāh, an *'Abdullāh*. A loyal slave of Allāh never leaves when he gets what he desires, because he's the slave of Allāh, and a slave never runs away from his master, because they may fear the master. Imagine when you're the slave of Allāh ﷻ. The decision of a slave to remain and not flee is influenced not only by fear, but it could be by love as well, or the combination of both.

In Junior High, when they taught us about slavery in the United States, it was noted that sometimes during attempts to escape, some enslaved individuals would inform their masters about the planned flight. Why? Because they felt a sense of loyalty to them due to their kindness. Their masters were kind to them. Considering the immense kindness and *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻ that He bestows on all of us — who would ever wish to flee from Him? And beyond that, who would desire to escape the great privilege and honour of being a servant of Allāh, a *'Abdullāh*? A

Mutabattil consciously decides to serve Allāh ﷻ, recognizing that being a servant of Allāh ﷻ is the greatest honour that one can attain.

Ibn Al-Qayyim in Madārij As-Sālikīn[1] said that *Tabattul* has two key aspects or elements. It requires a connection and a disconnection. Both are essential to attain the status of *Tabattul*. *Al-Infisāl*, disconnection or separation — and what he means by that is that one's heart must detach from personal desires or anything that competes with what Allāh ﷻ wants from you. It's disconnection or separation from distractions that draw one's heart away from Allāh ﷻ, whether it's out of fear or desire or any other reason – anything that diverts the heart away from Allāh ﷻ. After *Al-Infisāl*, you need to connect, which is *Al-Ittiṣāl*. That can only happen after the disconnection. *Al-Ittiṣāl*, the connection, is about the hearts bond and connection with Allāh ﷻ.

It's connecting to Allāh ﷻ by turning towards Allāh ﷻ with your heart sincerely and completely in love, fear, repentance, reliance, and in everything else. You disconnect your heart and free it from attachment to others. True detachment is not merely letting go of worldly possessions while still holding them in your heart. It's about removing the desire for them from your heart even while you still possess them. How many men can testify that their hearts are truly attached to Allāh ﷻ alone? How many mothers can say that their real attachment is not to their husbands or their children, and their real attachment is to Allāh ﷻ alone? Anyone who disconnects from Allāh ﷻ ends up being humiliated and a slave of creation like himself.

Establishing a connection with Allāh ﷻ involves engaging in various acts of *'Ibādah* throughout one's day in order to foster a continuous relationship with Allāh ﷻ. A person who maintains a connection with Allāh ﷻ from the moment they wake up until the moment they go to bed,

[1] Madārij Al-Sālikīn, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 2/250

while avoiding distraction on that spiritual path, they will discover Allāh ﷻ will fulfil their needs. He will alleviate their concerns. He will instil love for Him in their hearts. He will engage their tongues in His remembrance, and He will direct their actions towards his obedience. Engaging in various acts of *'Ibādah* strengthens your bond with Allāh ﷻ — the connection.

Remembering Allāh ﷻ blessings strengthen your connection with Allāh ﷻ. The more you reflect on the blessings that Allāh ﷻ bestowed upon you, the stronger your connection to Him will become. That will lead you to detach from worldly distractions. In times of hardship and solitude, who remains by your side when other creations depart? It's Allāh ﷻ who granted you all that you possess.

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ...﴿ فَاطِر: ٣﴾

O People! Remember Allāh's favours upon you…(Fāṭir:3)

Du'ā serves as a means of connection with Allāh ﷻ. When you make *Du'ā*, you have a connection with Allāh and only He knows about it. In moments of uncertainty, turn to Allāh ﷻ in *Du'ā*. When you seek something, make *Du'ā*. When you experience fear, rely on *Du'ā*. And also following the orders of Allāh ﷻ also strengthens your connection with Allāh ﷻ. Following Allāh ﷻ commands fosters a deep love for Him and it enhances your relationship with Allāh ﷻ. Engaging in *Salāh*, *Qiyām*, '*Ibādah*, *Hajj*, *'Umrah*, and charity — all those acts bring you closer to Allāh ﷻ

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣١﴾

Say, [O Muḥammad], "If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful." (ʾĀli ʿImrān:31)

It ends up making you love Allāh ﷻ and He will love you. So to recap, to strengthen your connection with Allāh ﷻ, free your heart from what distracts you in your path on to Allāh ﷻ. Stay in constant obedience, remember Allāh ﷻ's blessings, and make *Du'ā*.

And for *Tabattul* you also need to disconnect from your *Nafs*. It's impossible to completely separate yourself from your *Nafs*, because your *Nafs* is an essential part of your existence throughout your life. However, you can create a distance from the desires associated with the *Nafs* by continuously choosing to act contrary to those desires and in accordance to what Allāh ﷻ wants. The *Nafs* is inclined towards indulgence in matters like desires, laziness, eating, drinking, and so on. *Tabattul* is practiced by resisting the temptations of the *Nafs* in ways that align with the Will of Allāh ﷻ. And it's also essential, not only to detach yourself from the desires of the *Nafs* and the whispering of the *Shaytān*, but to also eliminate any distractions that may impede your journey towards Allāh ﷻ.

When some people are completely focused on business, their main goal is to dedicate all their energy and all their efforts into business. Everything they do revolves around business. Their mind is set on it. Happiness is when they profit, sadness is when they lose. Meetings, gatherings, talks — it's all about business. They prioritize their business goals and will connect to anything that will make their business successful, and they'll disconnect from everything that goes against their business. *Tabattul* means to shift that focusing energy entirely to Allāh ﷻ by letting go of anything that gets in the way.

Some people live their whole lives for sports. When you see them or you talk to them, they can tell you everything about sports. Whether it's soccer, football, or any other sport. They can tell you about the players

more than they can tell you about the lives of the *Sahābah*. Their laptops and their phones, both externally and internally, are filled with information and pictures about their favourite players and teams, because that's what they're truly passionate about. That's their entire world and that's their life. Their focus and goal is on the sport of the season. They connect to matters pertaining to sports and disconnect from what doesn't pertain to sports. They put their energy into activities that don't involve Allāh ﷻ. You sit with them and open topics other than sports and they'll show no interest. Talk about the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* — they're disconnected from that because they're connected to something else. A *Mutabattil's* mindset differs significantly from that of a businessman or a sports enthusiast or anyone with any *Dunyā* pursuit, no matter what it is.

A *Mutabattil* finds joy in his *'Ibādah* and he experiences sadness when he misses out on a moment that could be spent in *'Ibādah*. Their constant pursuit is to seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ. Their talk and interest is about Allāh ﷻ. And the status of *Tabattul* is a constant presence in an individual's life. It remains with one at all times in every location. It's not a part-time thing. A *Mutabattil* might be physically among others, but their soul and spirit is wandering around the *'Arsh* of Allāh ﷻ. They interact with people through their appearance and speech, but deep inside they're filled with a sense of Allāh ﷻ Greatness and Majesty. They celebrate with others in their happiness, yet their heart is heavy with fear and respect for their Lord. They feel sorrow alongside others, but their spirit is filled with peace and joy in what Allāh ﷻ has decreed. They're like a presence that's both there and not there. Existing among people, yet feeling a deeper connection beyond the physical presence.

Some of Imām Ahmad's students said, "We've never heard him talk about any *Dunyā* matters."[1] A practical example that's close to home, those who are familiar with my father — may Allāh ﷻ grant him a long

[1] Manāqib Al-Imām Aḥmad li Ibn Al-Jawzī, Ṭ. Dār Hajr, 1/295

life full of deeds — they can attest that when he's present, he actively participates in discussions that relate to Allāh ﷻ. However, if the conversation strays from that topic — even if it's among the Halāl and *Mubāh* topics — you'll observe him seated at times, but it's very evident that his thoughts and expressions are elsewhere. He's there, but he's not really there. He's immersed in his own reflections, supplications, and *Adhkār*, or at times, he may just choose to leave and depart.

Now keep in mind, the biggest, most significant form of *Tabattul* is turning away from any type of *Shirk*. That's the essence and meaning of *Al-Hanīfiyyah* and that's why after the verse about this in the *Qur'ān*,

...وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿ ٱلْمُزَّمِّل: ٨﴾

Devote yourself to Him with complete devotion. (al-Muzzammil:8)

The verse after that is about *Tawhīd*,

رَّبُّ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَٱتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا
﴿ ٱلْمُزَّمِّل: ٩﴾

[He is] the Lord of the East and the West; there is no deity except Him, so take Him as Disposer of [your] affairs. (al-Muzzammil:9)

The Lord of the East and the West, *Lā ilāha illā Huwa*, take Him alone as a *Wakīl*. After *Tabattul*, *Tawhīd* is emphasized. A person can only be truly described as a *Mutabattil* if they fully dedicate themselves to Allāh ﷻ and by not looking to others beside Him or having *Shirk* in their *'Ibādah*. If someone worships Allāh ﷻ but also includes others in that *'Ibādah*, they cannot be considered true servants of Allāh ﷻ. Also Ibn Wahib said that *Tabattul* is to completely worship Allāh ﷻ alone. To devote yourself entirely for, Allāh ﷻ,

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَٱنصَبْ ﴿ ٱلشَّرْح: ٧﴾

Once you've completed your essential worldly affairs and obligations, then dedicate yourself to 'Ibādah.

Zayd Ibn Aslam and Ad-Dahhāk said,

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَٱنصَبْ

is when you're done with your *Jihād*, then dedicated yourself to your *'Ibādah*.[1] Meaning go from *'Ibādah* to *'Ibādah*, back-to-back *'Ibādāt*. *Tabattul* is also being sincere in *Da'wah*. Qatadah said, "*Tabattul* is to be sincere in worshipping Allāh ﷻ and in *Da'wah*."

قُلْ هَٰذِهِۦ سَبِيلِىٓ أَدْعُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۚ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ...
﴿ يُوسُف: ١٠٨﴾

Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight..." (Yūsuf:108)

And Allāh ﷻ also said,

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّن دَعَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ...﴿ فُصِّلَت: ٣٣﴾

And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allāh… (Fuṣṣilat:33)

Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said about *Tabattul*,

أَخْلِصْ لَهُ إِخْلاصًا

Devote yourself [to Allāh ﷻ] with the utmost sincerity.[2]

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[1] Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 8/419; Ṭ. Dār Ṭayyibah, 8/433

[2] Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī (Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān), Ṭ. Dār Al-Tarbiyah wa Al-Turāth, 23/688; Ṭ. Dār Hajr, 23/377

وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓاْ إِلَّا لِيَعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ مُخۡلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ حُنَفَآءَ...
﴿ ٱلۡبَيِّنَة: ٥﴾

And they were not commanded except to worship Allāh, [being] sincere to Him in religion… (al-Bayyinah:5)

Make your intention to seek the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ alone in all visible and hidden acts of *'Ibādah* in order to seek the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. *Mujāhid* said,

وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

is being sincere in *Du'ā*[1], Just like the *Hadīth* that we went over many times,

إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلْ اللهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللهِ

When you ask (for anything), ask it from Allāh, and if you seek help, seek help from Allāh.[2]

And just like the poet said,

لاَ تَسْأَلَنَّ بُنَيَّ آدَمَ حَاجَةً ، وَسَلِ الَّذِي أَبوَابُه لاَ تُحْجَبُ

Do not ask the son of Adam for anything, but ask the One whose doors are never closed.

اللهُ يَغْضَبُ إِن تَرَكْتَ سُؤَالَهُ ، وَبُنَيَّ آدَمَ حِينَ يُسْأَلُ يَغْضَبُ

[1] Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī (Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān), Ṭ. Dār Al-Tarbiyah wa Al-Turāth, 23/688; Ṭ. Dār Hajr, 23/378

[2] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2516

Allah becomes angry if you leave asking Him, and the son of Adam becomes angry when asked.

And there's other *Ahādīth* that deter from *Tabattul*. There's other *Ahādīth* where *Tabattul* is not praiseworthy. The practice of entirely withdrawing from marriage as a form of *'Ibādah*, similar to what is in some of the Christian traditions where they abstain from marriage and go to the monastery. That, in *Islām*, is deterred from. That can be referred to as *Tabattul* from marriage, but it's not the proper, permissible, praiseworthy *Tabattul*. Abstaining from marriage, even though it's not a proper *'Ibādah*, was referenced by the term of *Tabattul* in a *Hadīth*. It was referred to as *Tabattul* because, as we said, the literal meaning of *Tabattul* is abstinence. Maryam ﷺ for example was called Maryam *Al-Batūl*. *Al-Batūl* comes from the same root word that we've been talking about. She abstained from men, or she abstained from *Dunyā*. In Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2], Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqās ﷺ said,

رَدَّ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ بْنِ مَظْعُونٍ التَّبَتُّلَ، وَلَوْ أَذِنَ لَهُ، لَاخْتَصَيْنَا

Allāh's Messenger objected to 'Uthmān Ibn Maz'ūn living in celibacy. If he had given him permission we would have had ourselves castrated.

The Messenger ﷺ rejected the idea of celibacy. Allāh ﷻ told his Messenger,

...وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿ ٱلْمُزَّمِّل: ٨﴾

Devote yourself to Him with complete devotion. (al-Muzzammil:8)

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 5073

[2] Sahih Muslim 1402

The Messenger ﷺ showed us the proper *Tabattul* and the disparaged, improper, wrong *Tabattul*. If you overexert yourself in *'Ibādah* to the point of fatigue, in certain situations, that may be deterred from. Especially if one drains himself to the point where he doesn't continue with the *'Ibādah*. In Bukhāri[1] and in Muslim[2], when the Messenger ﷺ entered the *Masjid*, he saw a rope hanging in between two pillars. He said, "What is this?" They said, "This rope is for Zaynab. When she gets tired from standing in *Salāh* she holds onto the rope so she can remain standing in *Salāh*." The Messenger ﷺ said,

حُلُّوهُ، لِيُصَلِّ أَحَدُكُمْ نَشَاطَهُ فَإِذَا فَتَرَ فَلْيَقْعُدْ

"Remove the rope. Pray as long as you feel active. When you get tired, relax and sit down."

The reason *'Ibādāt* like that would be disliked is so a person doesn't stop doing them in the future. In Sahīh Bukhāri[3] and Muslim[4], the Messenger ﷺ entered upon Ā'ishah ﵂ and she had a woman from Bani Asad and the Messenger ﷺ asked her who she was. Ā'ishah ﵂ said, "She's a woman who does not sleep at night because she's engaged in prayer all night long." And the Messenger ﷺ disapproved of that. He said,

مَهْ، عَلَيْكُمْ مَا تُطِيقُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ، فَإِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَمَلُّ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا

Do good deeds that are within your capacity. Allāh ﷻ never gets tired of giving reward until you get tired of doing your deeds.

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 1150

[2] Sahih Muslim 784

[3] Sahih Al-Bukhari 1151

[4] Sahih Muslim 785

Similar in meaning is the *Hadīth* that's in Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2],

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاس :عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الأَعْمَالِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ فَإِنَّ اللهَ لاَ يمَلُّ حَتىَّ تمَلُّواْ، وَإِنَّ أَحَبَّ الأَعْمَالِ إِلى اللهِ مَا دُووِمَ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنْ قَلَّ

O people, perform such acts as you are capable of doing, for Allāh does not grow weary but you will get tired. The acts most pleasing to Allāh are those which are done continuously, even if they are small.

He mentioned the reason why it's disliked. It's disliked if it's over one's capacity and ability. The acts most pleasing to Allāh ﷻ are those that are done continuously, even if they're not much, even if they amount to little. As long as they're continuous. The reason why the Messenger ﷺ disapproved of what Zaynab ﷺ or what that woman from Bani Asad did, the reason why he deterred from it was because they went above their capacity. It's going to wear them out, it's going to tire them out, they're going to get drained eventually, they're going to get wasted. Even if the *'Ibādah* that's over one's capacity and ability seems to last for a while, it won't hold up in the long run. That's what the *Hadīth* is warning from. The Messenger ﷺ wants the *'Ibādah* to continue.

There's a lot of other points, but the last point to mention for now is *Tabattul* cannot also be in innovated practices. Abstaining from marriage, like we said, as an *'Ibādah* it is not an act of worship. Nor is standing in the sun, for example, or sitting, and it's even mentioned in a *Hadīth* in Sahīh Bukhāri[3]. The Messenger ﷺ saw a man standing in the sun and he said, "What's wrong with him?" He was told that he vowed not to speak and he vowed not to sit in the shade. He's going to stay under the sun and he's going to stand and he's going to fast. So the Messenger ﷺ said,

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 5861

[2] Sahih Muslim 782

[3] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6704

مُرُوهُ فليتكلَّمْ، وَلْيَسْتَظِلَّ، وليجلسْ، ولْيُتِمَّ صِيامَهُ

Tell him to speak and to seek the shade and to sit, but let him complete his Siyām.

The Messenger ﷺ ordered him to complete that which was obedience to Allāh ﷻ, which was in *Mutāba'ah* to what Islam taught, and on the matters of disobedience or innovation, he was ordered not to do them.

Accepting the Decree of Allāh

Our topic today is about submission to the *Qadā'* of Allāh ﷻ while being pleased with it. And when we talk about this *'Ibādah*, the *'Ibādah* of submitting to the Will of Allāh ﷻ, there's two types. The first is Decrees of Allāh ﷻ that can be countered with other decrees. When faced with illness, hunger, thirst, or cold, a person may resist these feelings by countering their discomfort by the *Qadr* of Allāh ﷻ — by nourishment with food, by nourishment with water, by covering up from the cold with clothing. When a fire breaks out in someone's home, it's seen as a test from Allāh ﷻ. One doesn't just let it burn down, instead he should take actions to fight the flame with water, dirt, or other methods to put out what's perceived as a *Qadr* of Allāh ﷻ. When dealing with illness — that's a *Qadr* of Allāh ﷻ — a person doesn't just give in, he uses medication to tackle that disease. It's the duty of an individual to strive against such challenges with the available resources. This is opposing the Decree of Allāh ﷻ with a Decree of Allāh ﷻ, and that's proper.

When 'Umar ﷺ headed to Ash-Shām, he was informed upon entering Ash-Shām by Abu 'Ubaydah ﷺ that a plague had spread there. 'Umar ﷺ had a *Shūrā* with some of the *Sahābah*, and then he chose not to enter that city that was affected by the plague. In Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2], Abu 'Ubaydah ﷺ told 'Umar, "Isn't this fleeing from the *Qadr* of Allāh ﷻ?" And 'Umar ﷺ had *Fiqh* of the matter. He said, "Only if someone other than you said that, Abu Ubaydah!" Meaning, I would have taught that person a lesson if it was someone other than you. 'Umar gave us the principle on this matter, he said,

نَفِرُّ مِنْ قَدَرِ اللهِ إِلى قَدَرِ الله

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 5729

[2] Sahih Muslim 2219

We flee from the Decree of Allāh ﷻ to the Decree of Allāh ﷻ.

Both the act of repelling and what's being repelled are ultimately within the Divine Decree of Allāh ﷻ. Now if you take the necessary steps like 'Umar ﷺ did, and something goes wrong, this leads to the second type of submitting to the *Qadā'* of Allāh ﷻ, which is the matters that you can't do anything about. This second type of accepting the *Qadā'* of Allāh ﷻ involves situations that happen to a person where they have no control over what happens. When you run out of options, the only thing left to do is to accept what Allāh ﷻ destined. Sometimes, we encounter obstacles and circumstances that we simply can't alter. You attempted to get married right away and to start a family, but it didn't pan out. The time is passing and you're getting older. That's like a ship-wrecked person who's in turbulent water, and he's unable to swim or find any means for his rescue. [Or like] someone whose reputation has been tarnished by lies and slander, losses like death, or losses of businesses, or facing prison or being in prison.

When it comes to facing the *Qadā'* of Allāh ﷻ, there are different levels in dealing with them. The first one, which is the one we want to avoid, is to despair, complaining, being impatient, not being pleased with Allāh ﷻ or the *Qadr* He chose for you. The second is essential, and that's patience. Sometimes, you just have to be patient because there's no other option. The third is the *Mustahabb*, it's recommended. It's to find contentment and to accept what happened without holding any grudges. And the best way to deal with it, the fourth way, is to express gratitude to Allāh ﷻ in everything He chooses for you. We treat what we see as bad and good alike when it's from Allāh ﷻ because we love Allāh ﷻ.

When you truly love Allāh ﷻ, you love everything that comes from Him, what's good and what you think is bad. You trust that there is wisdom in what Allāh ﷻ has chosen and decided for you, and you submit to Him like a lifeless body before a person who's washing it. Accepting

and submitting to Allāh's decree is closely linked with other acts of *'Ibādah*. It involves recognizing Allāh ﷻ's Authority and Allāh's Judgements in His decisions. It's acknowledging His Fairness and Justice in dealing with us, because we take that from His name, *Al-Muqsit*. It's crucial to understand and believe that our experiences are guided from Allāh ﷻ's Wisdom, because we learn that from His name *Al-Hakīm*. We must accept that what happened was meant to happen and that what we missed was never ours; what was missed was something that wasn't going to hit you, and what hit you was not meant to miss you. We recognize that this decree that happened to you was written in Allāh ﷻ's Book before the creation even began. The Pen wrote by the Will of Allāh ﷻ everything and everything each person will face.

رُفِعَتِ الأَقْلاَمُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ

The pens have been lifted, and the pages have dried.[1]

Those who accept the Will of Allāh ﷻ will find peace and contentment. Those who resist it, like the first category, will be discontent.

The essence of this introduction revolves around the question of "How can we embrace the Decree of Allāh ﷻ with joy and thank Him for it?" First of all, you need to understand *Tawhīd*, and especially the names and qualities of Allāh ﷻ, like the names I just mentioned, *Al-Hakīm* and *Al-Muqsit*, or *Al-'Alīm*, *Al-Latīf*, *Ar-Rahmān*, *Ar-Rahīm*, *Al-'Azīz*, and *Ar-Ra'ūf*. These names foster a sense of tranquillity and contentment and positive expectations of Allāh ﷻ. His wisdom governs all that He creates and commands, and He is gentle, *Al- Latīf*, with his believing servants. It's through his kindness that He may allow a believer to face challenges and trials, yet within these difficulties lie blessings and goodness, and

[1] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2516

ultimately a favourable outcome. If someone truly understands their Lord and has knowledge of His names and Attributes, they will realize that the things that they dislike and the hardships that they face contain benefits and advantages that they can't fully comprehend.

In fact, as Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "The good that comes from what a person dislikes is greater than the good that comes from what they like."[1] Most of the benefits for our souls come from things that we find unpleasant, just as most of the harm, destruction, and downfall come from things that we love.

Ridhā of the *Qadr*, our topic, is an *'Ibādah* that refers to being at peace in your heart and feeling calm during trials. Being happy about what has befallen you from Allāh ﷻ, even if it's perceived as something bad. It's about being grateful and not wishing for things to be any different. It's wholeheartedly accepting Allāh ﷻ's choices for you in this life. A lot of people find this challenging, and that's why *Ulamā'* refute if this status that we're talking about is *Wājib* or *Mustahabb*. Is *Ridhā* of what happened and submitting to what happened *Mustahhab* or *Wājib*? The correct opinion is that it's *Sunnah*, because it's difficult to attain this high status, and there's no proof that it's *Wājib*.

But what matters here for us is that being pleased with what has befallen us and submitting to Allāh ﷻ, that's something that is among the highest levels of *Īmān* and *Ihsān*, and that's what we're trying to attain. *Taslīm* and submission helps one find peace, and it puts one at ease and away from suffering. You won't need to take tranquilizers. It's like a spiritual relaxer when we say *Taslīm* to the *Qadā'* of Allāh ﷻ, you're really saying, "Put me where you want Yā Allāh ﷻ. I'm with You on this and everything else You do, I'm happy with it." It's about willingly surrendering to Allāh ﷻ, because you know that His plans for you are way better than anything you could choose for your own self. You make *Du'ā*

[1] Madārij al-Sālikīn li Ibn al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm, 2/540; Ṭ. Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 2/208

and entrust Allāh ﷻ with yourself and accept and submit to what He does with you. Among the *Ad'iyah* of the Messenger ﷺ that we all know,

اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو، فَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ، وَأَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allāh, I hope for Your mercy. Do not leave me to myself even for the blinking of an eye (i.e. a moment). Correct all of my affairs for me. There is none worthy of worship but You.[1]

Another one,

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّومُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيثُ أَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ وَلاَ تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

O Ever-Living One, O Eternal One, by Your mercy I call on You to set right all my affairs. Do not place me in charge of my soul even for the blinking of an eye (i.e. a moment).[2]

In some narrations, it's mentioned as one of the *Adhkār* for the morning and evening. Every morning and evening you're entrusting Allāh ﷻ with yourself, so you accept what Allāh ﷻ does. You're saying, "Yā Allāh, don't leave me to my own fate, not even for the blink of an eye." You're saying "Yā Allāh, don't leave me to get lost. Don't abandon me, even for a split second or even for a moment. Don't let me handle my own affairs for even the briefest, shortest period of time." You're telling Allāh, "Yā Allāh I cannot bear to be left alone, not even for the slightest fraction of time." You're entrusting Allāh ﷻ with yourself, because you know His decisions for you are better than your own decisions for your own self. If Allāh ﷻ leaves you to your own self, He leaves you to

[1] Sunan Abi Dawud 5090

[2] Al-Mustadrak ʿalā Al-Ṣaḥīḥayn li Al-Ḥākim, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/730

weakness, He leaves you to disaster, He leaves you to failure. Allāh ﷻ leaving you to yourself means that you will destroy yourself. When you entrust yourself to Allāh ﷻ, you accept what Allāh ﷻ does. Full submission to Allāh ﷻ, like a lifeless body before someone washing it, as we just said. The peak of submission is to tell Allāh, "Yā Allāh, I'm not only patient, and I'm not only thankful, I'm wholeheartedly with Your decision, I don't want it any other way. My passion, Yā Allāh, is what You decree. Loss of life, loss of fortune, loss of a job — I wholeheartedly accept it, Yā Allāh."

Some say, "I made *Du'ā* for this matter, and the opposite happened!" That's a whole other topic, but it overlaps slightly with this topic, so I'll answer it briefly with a statement from Muhammad Ibn 'Ali. He said,

نَدْعُو اللَّهَ فِيمَا نُحِبُّ فَإِذَا وَقَعَ مَا نَكْرَهُ لَمْ نُخَالِفِ اللَّهَ فِيمَا أَحَبَّ

We invoke Allāh ﷻ to attain matters that we love. When we're faced with circumstances we dislike, we do not oppose Allāh ﷻ in that which He loves.[1]

This topic of submitting to the will of Allāh ﷻ is such an important act of *'Ibādah* so much that the Messenger ﷺ emphasized it and taught it to us when we go to sleep.

اللَّهُمَّ أَسْلَمْتُ نَفْسِي إِلَيْكَ، وَوَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِي إِلَيْكَ، وَفَوَّضْتُ أَمْرِي إِلَيْكَ، وَأَلْجَأْتُ ظَهْرِي إِلَيْكَ، رَغْبَةً وَرَهْبَةً إِلَيْكَ، لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ

O Allāh! I have surrendered myself over to you and have turned my face towards You, and leave all my affairs to You and depend on You and put

[1] Al-Riḍā ʿan Allāh bi-Qaḍāʾih li Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, Ṭ. Al-Dār Al-Salafiyyah, 1/106

my trust in You expecting Your reward and fearing Your punishment. There is neither fleeing from You nor refuge but with You.[1]

"Yā Allāh, I submit myself to you." That's what you're supposed to say when you go to sleep. This is our *'Ibādah* today. It relieves stress, it saves you from overthinking. In the last *'Ibādah*, solitude with Allāh ﷻ, I said it's an *'Ibādah* that brings you blessings from ways you don't perceive, and I mentioned examples of what took place in the *Mihrāb*, and with this *'Ibādah*, the *Taslīm* and *Ridhā* to the *Qadā'* of Allāh ﷻ. I'll say the same, with examples: When you surrender to Allāh and submit to Him, extraordinary blessings will flow into your life from ways you never expected. Everything that starts with submission ends with a great reward and a return. In the well-known story of Ibrāhīm ﷺ, we all know it, when he was about to sacrifice his son, notice the moment when he experienced relief. Relief doesn't come with improperly resisting or objecting to the *Qadr* of Allāh ﷻ. Relief comes with submission.

فَلَمَّآ أَسۡلَمَا وَتَلَّهُۥ لِلۡجَبِينِ ﴿ ٱلصَّافَّات: ١٠٣﴾

And when they had both submitted and he put him down upon his forehead. (aṣ-Ṣāffāt:103)

Falammā aslamā, *Taslīm*, our topic! When both father and son submitted themselves to the will of Allāh ﷻ, relief came in a way he didn't imagine, Allāh ﷻ spared his son.

فَلَمَّآ أَسۡلَمَا وَتَلَّهُۥ لِلۡجَبِينِ ﴿ ٱلصَّافَّات: ١٠٣﴾

And when they had both submitted and he put him down upon his forehead. (aṣ-Ṣāffāt:103)

[2] Sahih Al-Bukhari 7488

وَنَـٰدَيْنَـٰهُ أَن يَـٰٓإِبْرَٰهِيمُ ﴿ ٱلصَّافَّات: ١٠٤﴾

We called to him, "O Ibrāhīm! (aṣ-Ṣāffāt:104)

قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ ٱلرُّءْيَآ ۚ إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿ ٱلصَّافَّات: ١٠٥﴾

You have fulfilled the vision." Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good. (aṣ-Ṣāffāt:105)

Don't think it's only for Ibrāhīm ﷺ alone,

...إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿ ٱلصَّافَّات: ١٠٥﴾

...We thus reward the doers of good. (aṣ-Ṣāffāt:105)

It emphasized that it's not only for Ibrāhīm and his son. It's for everyone who submits like him. The reward for Yūsuf ﷺ for submitting to the will of Allāh ﷻ was authority in this land.

وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ ۚ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَن نَّشَآءُ...﴿ يُوسُف: ٥٦﴾

And thus We established Yūsuf in the land to settle therein wherever he willed. We touch with Our mercy whom We will, (Yūsuf:56)

Like the verses about Ibrāhīm ﷺ, at the end Allāh ﷻ said,

...وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿ يُوسُف: ٥٦﴾

...And We do not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.

Don't get the impression it's only for Yūsuf ﷺ, he gets what he got. It's everyone who follows in his footsteps. Your submission to Allāh and to the will of Allāh ﷻ is the gate to ease.

لِيَعْلَمِ الْمُبْتَلَى أَنَّ اسْتِسْلَامَهُ لِلْأَقْدَارِ هُوَ أَوَّلُ مَنَافِذِ الْفَرَجِ

Let the afflicted know that surrendering to fate is the first gateway to relief.

Islām is submission, if you're missing out on this *'Ibādah*, you're missing out on the essence and meaning of *Islām* — submission to the orders and commands of Allāh ﷻ and submission to the *Qadā'* and *Qadr* of Allāh ﷻ. Sometimes we just have to accept that there are things that we can't understand except by this *'Ibādah* of submitting to Allāh ﷻ. Trusting in Allāh ﷻ's Plan and submitting to Him helps keep our minds from going crazy with worry about what might happen next. Constantly waiting for an uncertain future can be stressful, but finding peace in entrusting Allāh ﷻ and accepting Allāh ﷻ's Will brings comfort and calmness to the hearts and minds.

Let me break this down in a more practical way for everyone to understand. If you're faced with challenges or you dislike something that happened to you, something that happened in your life or you're going through something you dislike, if you had the ability to alter your fate and to see the *Ghayb*, you wouldn't choose anything different. You couldn't choose something better. If you choose something else, you'd end up picking something that will harm you. That's because Allāh ﷻ's Plans for you are always the best option. Trying to change it, if you could, would ultimately be harmful for yourself.

لَوْ كُشِفَ لَكَ الْغَيْبُ، مَا اخْتَرْتَ إِلَّا مَا اخْتَارَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ

If the unseen were revealed to you, you would choose only what Allāh has chosen for you.

As a believer, Allāh ﷻ has crafted the perfect path for you filled with happiness for your *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. Regardless of what you're feeling inside, getting angry and letting it consume you, that will not alter Allāh ﷻ's Plans, so why put yourself through that pain? Make *Du'ā*, and keep it your slogan in this life to say

قَدَّرَ اللهُ، وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ

Allah has decreed, and whatever He wills, He does.

and always keep ripe on your tongue

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِالله

There is no power and no strength except with Allāh.

and that will change your life. With Allāh ﷻ, things are different. What Allāh ﷻ takes away from you as a believer who submits to Him is in reality something He's giving you. He may give you, as a believer, like He gives to everyone else, because He loves you. But when He does take from you as a believer who submits, it's a form of giving as well. In order to really submit to the will of Allāh ﷻ, your view of this *Dunyā* and this life has to change. It needs formatting. Don't let this vanishing *Dunyā* get to you, no matter what happens.

You won't be around in a hundred years. Neither will you kids. Maybe even your grandkids may not be around. Eventually you're going to be forgotten. Whoever prays for their grandfather by name nowadays? And if some do, who remembers their great-grandfathers and makes *Du'ā* for them by name? They're practically forgotten. My father came to this country in the early 60's, and we still live in the same neighbourhood that we lived in back then, and I remember many of the neighbours back then, when I was four and five years old. It used to be mainly senior citizens. None of them are around today. One time, I saw my neighbour take out a wheelchair and put it in the trash when I was four or five years old. I went

and took it, and I started playing with it. My dad told me that his father had passed away, who used to use that, and that's why they got rid of the wheelchair. The son eventually took over the house as the father wanted. He grew old and passed away too. The house changed hands approximately three or four times after that. That house, which may have caused so much stress for the original owner who worked hard for it, and he worked hard to leave it for his son, now it's no longer in the family, just like many other houses. Some of those houses may have even been levelled.

That's just an example. The job, it's not going to last forever. You're going to retire or get fired or leave it one way or another. The car that you're driving, it's going to get outdated and be in a junkyard in a few short years. This is the reality of life. The things we stress over don't last. We worry about temporary things and forget about what truly matters, so why not focus on what lasts forever, our *Ākhirah*? If we make our main concern the *Ākhirah*, then all the worries about this fleeting *Dunyā* will seem insignificant.

If you're looking for something to stress about, then think about the moments that you've missed without doing good deeds in this *Dunyā*, the moments you spent idly without any Ibādah. That's what you should be concerned about. Some people wake up and go to bed and the only actions they have to show in between those times are sins, *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. They should really think about what good deeds they've done for Allāh ﷻ and for *Islām* during that time. That's what should occupy one's mind and that's what should concern him.

If you really feel like crying, let it be over a sin you committed. If you want to feel happy, feel joy over an *'Ibādah* that you've done, because that's what really counts in the tens or hundreds or even thousands of years that we may spend in the grave and what comes after that in the eternal life, in the *Ākhirah*. Trust and submit to Allāh ﷻ in your *Dunyā* matters, but make your focus, your concern, and your worry the *Ākhirah*, and Allāh ﷻ will make your heart peaceful and rich in this

Dunyā. He will settle and organize your affairs in this *Dunyā* and He will make you content. Your provision and worldly gains will come with ease and without any doubt when you make your *Ākhirah* your goal, and that will put your mind at ease and peace.

The Honour of Being a Servant of Allāh

Today, *In shā'* Allāh, we'll talk about how honourable it is to be a servant of Allāh ﷻ, an 'Abd of Allāh ﷻ. And for you to understand how honourable it is to fall under the *'Ubūdīyyah* of Allāh ﷻ you need to understand that Allāh ﷻ made *'Ubūdīyyah* to Him the description of the best of His creation and those closest to Him. Being an 'Abd of Allāh ﷻ is the most esteemed rank a person can achieve. A 'Abd of Allāh, a slave of Allāh, is nothing but honour and praise, and that's why Allāh ﷻ referred to His chosen prophets as His servants in their most noble missions.

When Allāh ﷻ wants to praise someone, He calls him His 'Abd, His servant, His slave — the honorary, special form of *'Ubūdīyyah*. Allāh ﷻ referred to His most beloved Messenger ﷺ, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who reached the pinnacle of *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ, as His servant, and He referred to him as His servant when He was telling us about one of the most significant, honoured moments for the Messenger ﷺ, the Night of his Isrā' where he reached a place no one else had ever reached. When mentioning that to us, Allāh ﷻ referred to him as His slave.

سُبْحَـٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ...﴿ ٱلْإِسْرَاء: ١﴾

Glory be to the One Who took His servant…(Al-Isrā':1)

bi-'abdihi, Allāh ﷻ could've referred to him by his name or by one of his qualities, or any of the other titles or means that Allāh ﷻ could've used. But the description of the Messenger ﷺ as the Slave of Allāh ﷻ in this special, honourable occasion shows what an honourable title and status it is. If there had been a more prestigious, esteemed title than being the 'Abd of Allāh ﷻ it would have been used to address the Messenger ﷺ in that elevated position, when Allāh ﷻ elevated him high above to where

no one had ever reached. And in the context of *Isrā'* again, Allāh ﷻ also, again, referred to him as His '*Abd*.

فَأَوْحَىٰٓ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦ مَآ أَوْحَىٰ﴿ ٱلنَّجْم: ١٠﴾

And He revealed to His Servant what He revealed. (an-Najm:10)

In another esteemed context, when discussing the revelation of the book to the Messenger ﷺ, Allāh ﷻ also refers to him as His '*Abd*.

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ...﴿ ٱلْكَهْف: ١﴾

All praise is for Allāh Who has revealed the Book to His servant. (al-Kahf:1)

And also in another verse,

تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَـٰلَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴿ ٱلْفُرْقَان: ١﴾

Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner. (al-Furqān:1)

In expressing gratitude over the believers by sending them the Messenger ﷺ, which is, without a doubt, a great honour to the Messenger ﷺ, Allāh ﷻ referred to him as His servant and slave.

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُنَزِّلُ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦٓ ءَايَـٰتٍۭ بَيِّنَـٰتٍ...﴿ ٱلْحَدِيد: ٩﴾

It is He who sends down upon His Servant verses of clear evidence…(al-Ḥadīd:9)

When Allāh ﷻ expressed gratitude by keeping him safe, which is another great honour to the Messenger ﷺ, He referred to him as His slave.

أَلَيْسَ ٱللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُۥ...﴿ ٱلزُّمَر: ٣٦﴾

Is Allāh *not sufficient for His servant?... (az-Zumar:36)*

In another respected context, when He mentioned the worship of the Messenger ﷺ, He referred to him as His slave.

وَأَنَّهُۥ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ ٱللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُواْ يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ﴿ ٱلْجِنّ: ١٩﴾

And that when the Servant of Allāh stood up supplicating Him, they almost became about him a compacted mass. (al-Jinn:19)

He challenged the *Kuffār*,

وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا...﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة: ٢٣﴾

And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant… (al-Baqarah:23)

In fact, in Sahīh Bukhāri[1] it was reported by ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Al-’Ās ﷺ that the Messenger ﷺ was referred to in the Tawrāh as being the slave of Allāh.

أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي

The same with the other Messengers ﷺ. Allāh ﷻ honoured them by referring to them as His slaves. That shows how honourable that title is.

وَٱذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَآ أَيُّوبَ...﴿ ص: ٤١﴾

And remember Our servant Ayyūb… (Ṣād:41)

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 4838

...وَٱذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُۥدَ...﴿ ص: ١٧﴾

...And remember Our servant, Dāwūd... (Ṣād:17)

Another verse,

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُۥدَ سُلَيْمَـٰنَ ۚ نِعْمَ ٱلْعَبْدُ...﴿ ص: ٣٠﴾

And We blessed Dāwūd with Sulaymān — what an excellent servant (he was)!... (Ṣād:30)

About ʻĪsā ﷺ,

لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّهِ...﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ١٧٢﴾

Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allāh... (an-Nisāʾ:172)

In the verse about Zakarīyyah,

ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُۥ زَكَرِيَّآ﴿ مَرْيَم: ٢﴾

(This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zakarīyyah (Maryam:2)

It's consistent, just like with the Messenger ﷺ. They're the most cherished by Allāh ﷻ, they're the most honoured by Allāh ﷻ, and Allāh ﷻ refers to them as His servants and slaves because it's a title of respect.

وَٱذْكُرْ عِبَـٰدَنَآ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسْحَـٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُو۟لِى ٱلْأَيْدِى وَٱلْأَبْصَـٰرِ﴿ ص: ٤٥﴾

And remember Our servants, Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb – those of strength and (religious) vision. (Ṣād:45)

He called the angels by the same name.

...بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ﴿ ٱلْأَنْبِيَاء: ٢٦﴾

Rather, they are (but) honour*ed servants. (al-ʾAnbiyāʾ:26)*

Honoured servants – *'Ibādun mukramūn* is honoured servants.

وَقَالُواْ ٱتَّخَذَ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَلَدًا۬ ۗ سُبْحَـٰنَهُۥ ۚ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿ ٱلْأَنْبِيَاء: ٢٦﴾

And they say, "The Most Merciful has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, they are (but) honour*ed servants. (al-ʾAnbiyāʾ:26)*

The inhabitants of the *Jannah* we refer to with the same title.

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ ٱللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا﴿ ٱلْإِنْسَان: ٦﴾

A spring of which the (righteous) servants of Allāh will drink; they will make it gush forth in force (and abundance). (al-ʾInsān:6)

The bottom line is that *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ is an honour and being an 'Abd of Allāh ﷻ is a title of honour and praise.

In *Islām*, the concept of *'Ubūdīyyah* revolves around liberating individuals from all forms of bondage and *'Ubūdīyyah* to others. It allows them to become devoted servants solely to their Creator and Lord Allāh ﷻ. *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ liberates the servants from bondage to disbelief, immorality, wickedness, disobedience, and it guides them towards the realms of obedience to Allāh ﷻ, to righteousness, to gratitude, and honour. A person who is an 'Abd to Allāh ﷻ is honoured because he only fears Allāh ﷻ alone. That liberates him from fearing

anyone else in his heart, everything after that will seem small. True *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ is a promise that you will worship Allāh ﷻ alone according to how Allāh wants you to worship, to follow His commands, and to avoid what He has forbidden. *Ikhlās* and *Mutāba'ah*, it's very simple. That will make you honourable. Being only an 'Abd of Allāh ﷻ brings happiness like no other. Especially when you know that your birth, your sustenance, your death, and everything else is only in the hands of Allāh ﷻ, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. When those who follow misguidance tell you they're liberating, they're in reality leading individuals to *'Ubūdīyyah* to desires and to pleasures that render a person like cattle, even more misguided.

'Ubūdīyyah to Allāh ﷻ is the essence of freedom from everything other than Allāh ﷻ, it's the essence of dignity. Being an 'Abd of Allāh ﷻ is the only thing that liberates a heart from *'Ubūdīyyah* to creation, and it frees it from the humiliation and submission to anything other than Allāh ﷻ. Those who worship Allāh ﷻ alone are only bound to Him, their Creator, their Owner, their Controller, their Sustainer. Honour, dignity, and elevation come in *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ and disgrace and humiliation come in worshipping anything other than Allāh ﷻ.

When you bow your head down in humility to Allāh ﷻ during the nighttime in *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ, Allāh will raise your head high in honour throughout your day and throughout your life. What's astonishing about *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ is that in all forms of servitude, the Master benefits from the servant, except in the case of a believer's *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ, it's the servant who gains, because Allāh ﷻ does not need any of His creation.

...وَٱللَّهُ ٱلْغَنِىُّ وَأَنتُمُ ٱلْفُقَرَآءُ...﴿ مُحَمَّد: ٣٨﴾

...and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...
(Muḥammad:38)

This special, honorary *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ is special. It's only for the believers. It's *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ by submission, love, and obedience. This special *'Ubūdīyyah*, when one submits by choice, is what truly brings honour to an individual, and everyone is at levels in this *'Ubūdīyyah*. The highest rank, of course, belongs to the Messenger ﷺ and then the messengers and prophets. The return and benefit for *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ is enormous. There are many verses in the *Qur'ān* that mention this. Protection from the *Shaytān*,

إِن عِبَادِى لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَن...﴿ ٱلْحِجْر: ٤٢﴾

Indeed, My servants - no authority will you have over them…
(al-Ḥijr:42)

...وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ﴿ ٱلْحِجْر: ٣٩﴾

...and I will mislead them all. (al-Ḥijr:39)

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ﴿ ٱلْحِجْر: ٤٠﴾

Except, among them, Your chosen servants. (al-Ḥijr:40)

No fear,

يَـٰعِبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْيَوْمَ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ
﴿ ٱلزُّخْرُف: ٦٨﴾

O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve, (az-Zukhruf:68)

Glad tidings,

...فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ﴿ ٱلزُّمَر: ١٧﴾

...So give good tidings to My servants (az-Zumar:17)

The verses on that are many. All that is the special *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ. That's the special, honorary, *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ.

Allāh ﷻ referred in the *Qur'ān* to all His creations as His servants, including the non-believers. So how does that make sense? One of course needs to understand that everything in the heavens and in the earth is a servant of Allāh ﷻ, whether by choice or by force. Everything is subservient to Allāh ﷻ and you can understand it by understanding that Ibn Al-Qayyim[1] categorized *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ as two types, a specific one and a general one.

The general type of *'Ubūdīyyah* is by compulsion, it's not by choice. Everyone in the heavens and in the earth is a servant of Allāh ﷻ, whether they're good or bad, believers or disbelievers. There's no way to escape this type of *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ. This kind of *'Ubūdīyyah* does not suggest any privilege or honour. This general *'Ubūdīyyah* includes all creations, believers included. Believers share the general *'Ubūdīyyah* with the *Kuffār*, but the private, specific, honourable *'Ubūdīyyah* is reserved for the believers alone. The worst of the *Kuffār* are called His slaves. The ones who say that about Allāh ﷻ which makes the heavens burst, and the earth split, and the mountains crumble, are *'Ibād* of Allāh ﷻ. The ones who abuse Allāh ﷻ with slander are *'Ibād* of Allāh ﷻ.

إِن كُلُّ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّآ ءَاتِي ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ عَبْدًا ﴿ مَرْيَم: ٩٣﴾

There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a servant. (Maryam:93)

[1] Madārij Al-Sālikīn, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/160 ff.

In this context, this general context, they're slaves of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ referred to the sinners and disbelievers as his servants.

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ ءَأَنتُمْ أَضْلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِى هَـٰٓؤُلَآءِ...﴿ ٱلْفُرْقَان: ١٧﴾

And [mention] the Day He will gather them and that which they worship besides Allāh *and will say, "Did you mislead these, My servants…(al-Furq̈ān:17)*

He called them His servants despite their misguidance.

...وَمَا ٱللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ﴿ غَافِر: ٣١﴾

And Allāh *wants no injustice for [His] servants. (Ghafir:31)*

Many verses, and Allāh ﷻ said,

...إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ ٱلْعِبَادِ﴿ غَافِر: ٤٨﴾

Indeed, Allāh *has judged between the servants. (Ghafir:48)*

And Allāh ﷻ,

قُلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ عَـٰلِمَ ٱلْغَيْبِ وَٱلشَّهَـٰدَةِ أَنتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِى مَا كَانُوا۟ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ﴿ ٱلزُّمَر: ٤٦﴾

Say, "O Allāh, *Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, You will judge between your servants concerning that over which they used to differ." (az-Zumar:46)*

This includes everyone, the righteous and evil. This form of *'Ubūdīyyah* offers no indication of privilege or prestige for the disbelievers and sinners. So why are the *Kuffār* called *'Ibād* of Allāh ﷻ?

Because the term *'Ubūdīyyah* or *'Ibādah*, that term comes from the context or meaning of *adh-Dhull wa-l-khuḍū'*, humility and submission. Some people willingly demonstrate their humility towards Allāh ﷻ and their submission towards Him. They become with that among the special, honorary category, the special *'Ubād*, the special worshippers. Others, however, will submit by force. So the special, honorary *'Ubūdīyyah* that's in the *Qur'ān*, it's about those who willingly turn to Allāh ﷻ. The general *'Ubūdīyyah* is for everyone, everyone is under the control of Allāh ﷻ. Everyone will submit to Allāh ﷻ. Everyone will stand before Allāh ﷻ, by force or by choice. The distinction between the special or general *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ is like the distinction between the general or special *Sujūd* to Allāh ﷻ. The special *Sujūd* to Allāh ﷻ in the *Qur'ān* refers to the believers making *Sujūd*. They're honoured for that; they're praised for making *Sujūd* to Allāh ﷻ by choice. Allāh ﷻ said,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ عِندَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِۦ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُۥ وَلَهُۥ يَسْجُدُونَ ۩ ﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف: ٢٠٦﴾

Indeed, those who are near your Lord [i.e., the angels] are not prevented by arrogance from His worship, and they exalt Him, and to Him they prostrate. (al-ʾAʿrāf:206)

And Allāh ﷻ said,

...إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَـٰتُ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ خَرُّواْ سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا ۩ ﴿ مَرْيَم: ٥٨﴾

When the Verses of the Most Gracious were recited unto them, they fell down prostrate and weeping. (Maryam:58)

However, there's general *Sujūd*, and that refers to everyone. Everyone will submit to Allāh ﷻ, believers and non-believers. This does not suggest any privilege or honour. It's like the verse,

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَظِلَٰلُهُم بِٱلْغُدُوِّ وَٱلْءَاصَالِ ﴿١٥﴾ ﴿ ٱلرَّعْد: ١٥ ﴾

And to Allāh prostrates whoever is within the heavens and the earth, willingly or by compulsion, and their shadows [as well] in the mornings and the afternoons. (ar-Raʿd:15)

Unto Allāh ﷻ falls in prostration everyone in the heavens and in the earth, by force or by choice, willingly or unwillingly. The distinction between the special and general *'Ibādah*, special and general *Sujūd*, is also like the special and general *Qunūt*. *Qunūt*, we mean by that the obedience to Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ praised the believers for their obedience.

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَٰنِتٌ ءَانَآءَ ٱلَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَآئِمًا يَحْذَرُ ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُواْ رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ...﴿ ٱلزُّمَر: ٣٩ ﴾

Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing (in prayer), fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, (like one who does not)? (az-Zumar:39)

Is he who is obedient to Allāh, prostrating and standing in *Salāh* during the night and he who fears the *Ākhirah* and wants the mercy of Allāh ﷻ, is he like one who disbelieves? And He said about Maryam ﷺ

...وَكَانَتْ مِنَ ٱلْقَٰنِتِينَ﴿ ٱلتَّحْرِيم: ١٢ ﴾

And she was of the devoutly obedient. (at-Taḥrīm:12)

She was obedient to Allāh ﷻ. This is the praised type of obedience. The general obedience that does not suggest any privilege or honour is like the general *Qunūt* – it's the general *Qunūt* and it's mentioned in the verse,

...لَّهُۥ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَّهُۥ قَٰنِتُونَ ﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة: ١١٦ ﴾

To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him. (al-Baqarah:116)

All are obedient to Him, meaning they will all come in humiliation and submission, *Khāḍi'ūn adhillah*. So there's the general *'Ubūdīyyah* and the general *Sujūd*, and the general obedience to Allāh ﷻ that does not suggest any privilege or honour. There's the special *'Ubūdīyyah*, there's the special *Sujūd*, and there's the special obedience to Allāh ﷻ, that's for those who submit willingly to Allāh ﷻ and that's an honour for them *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*.

The bottom line is that one who submits to Allāh ﷻ attains the peak of honour. *'Ubūdīyyah*, submission to Allāh ﷻ is nothing but honour, and the title of *'Abdullāh* represents the highest form of honour. *'Ibādah* is an honourable task, and that's why Al-Qādi 'Iyād said in one of his poems,

وَمِمَّا زَادَنِيْ شَرَفًا وَتِيْهًا ، وَكِدْتُ بِأَخْمُصِيْ أَطَأُ الثُّرَيَّا

And what increased me in honour *and pride,*
Until I almost walked over the stars with the soles of my feet.

What makes me so proud, he's saying — what makes me feel so distinguished, what makes me feel so honoured, so much that I feel like I want to step over the stars — I mean out of everything, what do you think he chose? What made him so proud? Being a slave of Allāh ﷻ.

وَمِمَّا زَادَنِيْ شَرَفًا وَتِيْهَا ، وَكِدْتُ بِأَخْمُصِيْ أَطَأُ الثُّرَيَّا
دُخُوْلِيْ تَحْتَ قَوْلِكَ يَا عِبَادِيْ ، وَأَنْ صَيَّرْتَ أَحْمَدَ لِي نَبِيًّا

And what increased me in honour *and pride —*
Until I almost walked over the stars with the soles of my feet —
Was my entering under Your saying: 'O My servants'
And that You made Ahmad (Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) my Prophet.[1]

What made him so proud and so distinguished and so honoured? He said it's that I fall under *"Yā 'Ibādy"*. The ultimate honour for me, he's saying, is being included under "O my Servants!" And also, he mentioned, "And that you have chosen Ahmad ﷺ as my messenger." He's basically saying I'm so ecstatic at being included under "*Ya 'Ibādy"*. I'm so excited that I feel like jumping over the stars.

Take pride in whatever you wish, there's no pride except in being an *'Abd* of Allāh ﷻ. It's an honour you can choose to attain; it's under your control. If you desire this honour, it's up to you to become a servant of Allāh ﷻ. If you want to achieve a high status with Allāh ﷻ, then strive to be an 'Abd of Allāh ﷻ. A person reaches the highest level and the utmost honour and closeness to perfection based on how they embrace *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ. The more someone embodies *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ, the closer to perfection they are, the higher their status becomes.

[1] Ghidhāʾ al-Albāb fī Sharḥ Manẓūmat al-Ādāb li al-Saffārīnī, Ṭ. Muʾassasat Qurṭubah, 2/475

Getting to Know Allāh

We spoke about the honour of *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ. Now, in order to attain *'Ubūdīyyah*, your first step is to get to know Allāh ﷻ. The attainment of *'Ibādah* is contingent upon a profound understanding of Allāh ﷻ and a deep consciousness of His presence. Knowledge about Allāh ﷻ is essential in humbling the heart before Him. Knowledge about Allāh ﷻ attains one a state of *'Ubūdīyyah* with submission and humility. Let me give you this topic in a way you'll understand it.

When you first meet someone, you usually see him just like another person. You may not even pay attention to that individual. But as you get to know this person better, when you learn more about that individual, you learn about skills he has, you learn about experiences, you learn about qualifications, or other positions that that person may hold, you begin to respect and admire him. Respect and admiration for that individual grow significantly after you learn about him. When you see someone, you don't know if he's a *Jāhil* or a layman or a *Tālib 'Ilm* or an *'Ālim*, but then you learn more about him, you learn about the *Shuyūkh* he studied with, or his credentials, or something he memorized and studied. The level of respect and admiration for that person increases considerably. This change in perception affects how you interact with that person, and it's going to be very different from the initial impression and how you dealt with him in the beginning before you knew him,

...وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَثَلُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ٦٠﴾

...to Allāh belongs the Supreme Example... (an-Naḥl:60)

We need to deepen our understanding about Allāh ﷻ, because it will enhance our reverence, our fear, our hope, our *Tawakkul* on Allāh ﷻ, along with other aspects of *'Ibādah*. You become afraid of an opponent when you realize his strength. You request something from someone, after you're aware that they possess what you need. You seek assistance from someone after you know their skills —

...وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَثَلُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ...﴿ ٱلنَّحل: ٦٠﴾

...to Allāh belongs the Supreme Example... (an-Naḥl:60)

You will worship Allāh ﷻ properly after you learn about Him. *Khashyah* for example, fear of Allāh ﷻ, how do you attain that *'Ibādah*? Allāh ﷻ told us,

...إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى ٱللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ٱلْعُلَمَٰٓؤُاْ...﴿ فَاطِر: ٢٨﴾

...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge... (Fāṭir:28)

With knowledge of Allāh ﷻ, just like with all the other *'Ibādāt*. The greater the completeness of knowledge and understanding of Allāh ﷻ, the more profound and abundant the reverence towards Allāh ﷻ becomes. He told us,

لَّا تُدْرِكُهُ ٱلْأَبْصَٰرُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ ٱلْأَبْصَٰرَ...﴿ ٱلْأَنْعَام: ١٠٣﴾

Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision... (al-ʾAnʿām:103)

He told us,

...لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ...﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ١١﴾

...There is nothing like unto Him... (aš-Šūrā:11)

He told us,

...وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِۦ عِلْمًا﴿ طٰهٰ: ١٠﴾

...but they do not encompass it [i.e., what He knows] in knowledge. (Ṭāʾ Hāʾ:10)

No vision can grasp Him. There's nothing like Him. So how do we know and learn about Allāh ﷻ? We, as humans on this Earth, have been granted a limited understanding about Allāh ﷻ that our small minds can comprehend. We were granted a sufficient amount of knowledge about Allāh ﷻ that's necessary for our existence in this *Dunyā* and our performance of our *'Ibādāt*.

Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ taught us about the Names and Qualities of Allāh ﷻ. Many people live their lives without truly understanding the simple, basic meanings of many of Allāh ﷻ's Names and Qualities. Some might go for months or years without using certain Names of Allāh ﷻ, and it may be Names that they know about! They might not even use them in *Du'ā*, even though using them in *Du'ā* increases the likelihood of the *Du'ā* being accepted. But they don't even use those Names when it benefits them. Allāh ﷻ has given us the understanding that we need to know about Him in order to live our lives and to worship Him properly.

This understanding is derived, in this particular matter that we're talking about, from the Names and Attributes of Allāh ﷻ that He revealed to us. The impact of these Names and Attributes is evident in His creation. As you delve deeper into the effects of the Names of Allāh ﷻ and His Qualities and how they affect the world around us, your knowledge about Allāh ﷻ and your *Īmān* and *Yaqīn* in your *'Ibādah* will deepen significantly. Knowledge about the Names of Allāh ﷻ and His Attributes is not something that can be achieved in a brief discussion or in a single class of *'Aqīdah* under an instructor that's trying to teach you the *Salaf's* interpretations of the Names and Qualities of Allāh ﷻ. That, right there, is merely the beginning. That, right there, resembles a child learning the alphabet as they embark on their journey of reading and writing. Understanding Allāh ﷻ and properly comprehending His Names and

Attributes begins with the *'Aqīdah* course that's rooted in the teachings of the *Salaf*, however, this knowledge is something you will continue to explore and deepen throughout your entire life.

Each day, you'll come to see how much you don't know about Allāh ﷻ. It's a lifelong journey of learning that continues until the end of your life. At times in your life, you may encounter experiences that deepen your understanding of a Name or an Attribute of Allāh ﷻ that you've known all throughout your life. You may have recited that Name in every single *Salāh* that you performed and every *Du'ā* that you asked Allāh ﷻ. Yet, a particular event in your life can lead to a profound realization about a Name or a Quality of Allāh ﷻ that significantly enhances your *Īmān*. During one of my toughest times, I had a dream

about the verse,

ٱللَّهُ لَطِيفٌۢ بِعِبَادِهِۦ...﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ١٩﴾

Allāh is Subtle with His servants… (aš-Šūrā:19)

and I mentioned this before in a talk. I'm familiar with the Name of Allāh ﷻ *Al-Latīf* and the Quality. I've known it throughout my life, I've studied the Tafsīr of the verse, and I had extensive reading on that topic, but this dream made me aware of the Name *Al-Latīf*. Through the Name and the Attribute of Allāh ﷻ, *Al-Lutf*, and the situation that I encountered, I attained an understanding that had previously been beyond my grasp. This experience enriched my *Īmān* and enabled me to perceive Allāh's *Lutf* in a way I never thought possible.

While Allāh ﷻ cannot be seen by us physically in this *Dunyā*, the entirety of this universe serves as a testament to His existence, to His Qudrah, to the Names and Qualities that we know about. In everything, in every aspect of existence, there's a sign that points to the oneness of Allāh ﷻ and His Qualities. Like the poet Labīd Ibn Rabī' Al-'Āmiri said,

فَيَا عَجَبًا كَيْفَ يُعْصَى الإِلَهُ ، أَمْ كَيْفَ يجْحَدُهُ الجَاحِدُ

وَفِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَهُ آيَةٌ ، تَدُلُّ عَلَى أَنَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ

وَلِلَّهِ فِي كُلِّ تَحْرِيكَةٍ ، وَتَسْكِينَةٍ أَبَدًا شَاهِدُ

How astonishing it is that the Lord can be disobeyed,
Or how the disbeliever can deny Him!
For in everything there is a sign,
Pointing to the fact that He is the One.
And for Allāh, in every movement and stillness,
There is always a witness (to His existence and Greatness).[1]

In every moment, in every movement, in every stillness, there's evidence pointing to Allāh ﷻ. He informed us that He has Names and Attributes, the effect of what we see in His universe and creation around us. When people describe someone as being, for example, generous, the description resonates with you more when you see evidence of that person's generosity. If you say he's a millionaire and he's generous, that conveys a message. But when you say he's a millionaire, and he gave 75% of his wealth to orphans, or better yet, you see him actually spending that wealth on poor people and building houses for poor people − his generosity becomes more impactful when it's supported by that tangible evidence of that generosity.

The more you observe of those acts and the more you witness them firsthand, the more convinced you become that his description of being generous is true. Allāh ﷻ has the Supreme Examples. Allāh ﷻ told us that on this Earth, there are signs for the people of faith to seek and know. You can start by looking for those signs within yourself. Start by looking at your own self for the effects of the Names and Qualities of Allāh ﷻ.

[1] Dīwān Labīd ibn Rabīʿah bi-Sharḥ al-Ṭūsī, Ṭ. Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1/280

وَفِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ ءَايَٰتٞ لِّلۡمُوقِنِينَ ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ٢٠ ﴾

And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith] (aḍ-Ḍāriyāt:20)

وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡۚ أَفَلَا تُبۡصِرُونَ ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ٢١ ﴾

And in yourselves. Then will you not see? (aḍ-Ḍāriyāt:21)

The more we explore and reflect on these Attributes, the more we learn about Allāh ﷻ, which in turn deepens our sense of devotion and *'Ibādah* in our hearts. We aim to achieve the worship of the heart prior to the limbs. The heart needs to submit in Sujud before the forehead does. The worship of the heart is significantly more challenging than the worship of the limbs. We said that *'Ubūdīyyah* is nothing but honour, we mentioned that in a previous talk. That honour of *'Ubūdīyyah* starts by getting to learn about Allāh ﷻ.

You will not achieve *Dhull* or *Khudū'* or other various aspects of *'Ubūdīyyah* until you come to learn about Allāh ﷻ. Understanding His Names and Attributes is essential. The deeper your knowledge of Him, the more your *'Ubūdīyyah* will be perfected internally before it manifests externally. The more you learn about Allāh ﷻ, the more your *'Ibādah* improves, both in how much you do and how meaningful it becomes. When your heart gains knowledge about Allāh ﷻ, it naturally surrenders and submits and loves Allāh ﷻ. Allāh said, ﷻ

وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡۚ أَفَلَا تُبۡصِرُونَ ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ٢١ ﴾

And in yourselves. Then will you not see? (aḍ-Ḍāriyāt:21)

You don't need to look far to see the effects of Allāh ﷻ's Qualities. Your mind, your heart — things no advanced technology can ever imitate. Your speech, your limbs — some *Ulamā'* even mentioned going to the bathroom as signs under this verse.

وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡۚ أَفَلَا تُبۡصِرُونَ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ٢١﴾

And in yourselves. Then will you not see? (aḏ-Ḏāriyāt:21)

Consider even more simple matters, or what may be seen as simple, but they're not simple. The eyebrows, how they grow outwards instead of growing downwards, because if they grew downward, they would block your vision. The design Allāh ﷻ perfected you with adds to your appearance and also helps keep sweat from running down to your eyes. Examine the same verse,

وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡۚ أَفَلَا تُبۡصِرُونَ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ٢١﴾

And in yourselves. Then will you not see? (aḏ-Ḏāriyāt:21)

from an alternative perspective to understand the impact of Allāh ﷻ on you. Take it from another angle. Reflect on the blessings of your weaknesses to increase your knowledge about Allāh ﷻ. Your weakness, your limitations, and your reliance on Allāh ﷻ due to your weakness will help you gain knowledge about Allāh ﷻ. It is supposedly among the sayings of the *Isrā'īlīyyāt*, that

يَا إِنْسَانُ اعْرَفْ نَفْسَك تَعْرِفْ رَبَّك

O human, know yourself and you will know your Lord.

Understand yourself, you'll understand your Creator better. Or

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord.[1]

[1] Madārij al-Sālikīn li Ibn al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm, 2/46; Ṭ. Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1/426-7

The servant is poor, we're incomplete, we're in need. As the servant's awareness of their own deficiencies, flaws, poverty, and weakness increases, so too does their understanding of their Lord's Attributes of Perfection. The more you're aware of your ignorance, the more you will come to know about Allāh ﷻ's Knowledge. The more you recognize your weakness, the more you will recognize and understand Allāh ﷻ's Strength. The more you acknowledge your incapacity, the more you will become aware of Allāh ﷻ's Capability. Those who perceive their own humiliation will recognize Allāh ﷻ's Honour. *Ma'rifatullāh* comes in recognizing the greatness of Allāh ﷻ and respecting Him. This topic, understanding Allāh, comes through respecting Allāh ﷻ and recognizing His Greatness. Nūh told his people,

﴿مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا﴾ نُوح: ١٣

What is [the matter] with you that you do not attribute to Allāh [due] grandeur? (Nūḥ:13)

He's telling them that's basically the cause of your *Shirk*. You don't respect Allāh ﷻ, you don't have knowledge of the Greatness of Allāh ﷻ. How do we recognize the Greatness of Allāh ﷻ? Nūh answered it in the following verses. You recognize it by learning about Allāh ﷻ's Qualities, and their effect on the creations on this Earth. The same *Tawhīd* that Nūh taught his people is the topic today.

﴿مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا﴾ نُوح: ١٣

What is [the matter] with you that you do not attribute to Allāh [due] grandeur? (Nūḥ:13)

﴿وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا﴾ نُوح: ١٤

While He has created you in stages? (Nūḥ:14)

He's giving them examples to learn about Allāh ﷻ. You were created in stages, similar to what we were talking about earlier.

وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡۚ أَفَلَا تُبۡصِرُونَ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ٢١﴾

And in yourselves. Then will you not see? (aḍ-Ḍāriyāt:21)

Look at yourself for the effect of Allāh ﷻ's creation. Nūh wasn't done there, he said,

أَلَمۡ تَرَوۡاْ كَيۡفَ خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ سَبۡعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٖ طِبَاقٗا﴿ نُوح: ١٥﴾

Do you not consider how Allāh has created seven heavens in layers? (Nūḥ:15)

Look at the effect of the Qualities of Allāh ﷻ in the creation of the seven heavens, one is above the other.

وَجَعَلَ ٱلۡقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورٗا وَجَعَلَ ٱلشَّمۡسَ سِرَاجٗا﴿ نُوح: ١٦﴾

And made the moon therein a [reflected] light and made the sun a burning lamp? (Nūḥ:16)

He set up within the heavens the moon as a light and the sun as a lamp.

وَٱللَّهُ أَنۢبَتَكُم مِّنَ ٱلۡأَرۡضِ نَبَاتٗا﴿ نُوح: ١٧﴾

And Allāh has caused you to grow from the earth a [progressive] growth. (Nūḥ:17)

He bought you forth from the earth.

ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا﴿ نُوح: ١٨﴾

Then He will return you into it and extract you [another] extraction. (Nūḥ:18)

Then he will return you to this earth and then he'll bring you forth another time, *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah*, on the day of resurrection.

وَٱللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا﴿ نُوح: ١٩﴾

And Allāh has made for you the earth an expanse (Nūḥ:19)

Allāh ﷻ made this earth widespread,

لِّتَسْلُكُواْ مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا﴿ نُوح: ٢٠﴾

That you may go about therein in broad roads. (Nūḥ:20)

with spacious pathways. Nūh is basically telling them your *Shirk* is because you didn't know Allāh ﷻ. You didn't recognize the Greatness of Allāh ﷻ. He provided them with numerous examples illustrating the Greatness of Allāh ﷻ, demonstrating the impact of His Qualities on the world around them. To distance yourself from *Shirk* and from sins and to cultivate a close, honourable, *'Ubūdīyyah* with Allāh ﷻ, it's essential to gain knowledge about Allāh ﷻ and his greatness.

وَمَا قَدَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِۦ...﴿ ٱلزُّمَر: ٦٧﴾

They made not a just estimate of Allāh such as is due to Him. (az-Zumar:67)

is in the *Qur'ān* three times. They have not shown Allāh ﷻ His proper reverence. Let me summarize this talk in a few sentences. In order to embark on the honourable journey that we've been talking about, in order

to attain that honourable journey, one must first seek knowledge of Allāh ﷻ. That's the first step. The first step is to get to know Allāh ﷻ. The greater the understanding of Allāh ﷻ, the closer one grows in *'Ubūdīyyah* of Allāh ﷻ, the deeper the fear of disobedience becomes. If one falters or disobeys Allāh ﷻ after reaching this honourable, high status with Allāh ﷻ — everyone is destined to make mistakes — but if he's at a high status with Allāh ﷻ and he does make a mistake, after his repentance, he's elevated beyond his state prior to the sin. So our point is to learn about Allāh ﷻ in order to walk on the honourable path of *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ.

Maintaining a Heart in a Status of Ihsan

We spoke about the honour of *'Ubūdīyyah*, and then after that we spoke about how to attain *'Ubūdīyyah* through knowledge about Allāh ﷻ. And now the ultimate level and state of *'Ubūdīyyah* that we should strive for is to maintain a heart that consistently feels the presence of Allāh ﷻ, as if one sees Allāh ﷻ. A heart where the Unseen feels as if they are physically seeing it. It's as if they are seeing Allāh ﷻ, as if they are seeing the *'Arsh* of Allāh ﷻ, as if they are watching the people of *Jannah* visiting each other in *Jannah*, as if they are watching the people in *Jahannam* crying out in suffering. Those who know about Allāh ﷻ strive for this status, and they compete to achieve it,

...وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ ٱلْمُتَنَـٰفِسُونَ﴿ ٱلْمُطَفِّفِين: ٢٦﴾

...So for this let the competitors compete. (al-Muṭaffifīn:26)

One of the most significant methods to elevate your level to *Ihsān* is to reflect on the impact of Allāh ﷻ's creations on this earth, which was the last topic that we spoke about. Yes, we cannot physically see Allāh ﷻ in this *Dunyā* with our eyes, that's because this life is a test. If everyone could see Allāh ﷻ, then everyone would believe, and that would undermine the purpose of the test, and also due to our weakness as human beings in this *Dunyā*, we wouldn't be able to endure it. Just like Allāh ﷻ told Mūsā ﷺ

...إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَن تَرَىٰنِى...﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف: ١٤٣﴾

"You cannot see Me..." (al-ʾAʿrāf:143)

He couldn't withstand to see Allāh ﷻ in this life.

...قَالَ لَن تَرَىٰنِي وَلَٰكِنِ ٱنظُرْ إِلَى ٱلْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ ٱسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُۥ فَسَوْفَ تَرَىٰنِي...﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف: ١٤٣﴾

Allāh said: "You cannot see Me, but look upon the mountain; if it stands still in its place then you shall see Me." (al-ʾAʿrāf:143)

...فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُۥ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُۥ دَكًّا...﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف: ١٤٣﴾

...So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it collapse to dust... (al-ʾAʿrāf:143)

Ibn Taymiyyah[1] said we don't see Allāh ﷻ in this *Dunyā* because our eyes are too weak, not because it's impossible to see Him. It's like when someone stares directly at the sun, they can't see it clearly because their eyes can't handle its brightness, not because the sun itself is unseeable. In the *Ākhirah*, Allāh ﷻ will strengthen the abilities so that one can see Him *In shā'* Allāh. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all that honour. How many even actually long or think about this in their private *'Ibādāt* or make *Du'ā* for it?

Now, even though we established that we can't see Allāh ﷻ physically in this *Dunyā*, believers can sense His presence in their hearts as if they are seeing Him. In the long *Hadīth*[2], when Jibrīl ﷺ asked the Messenger ﷺ several questions, the Messenger ﷺ defined *Ihsān* and he said,

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاه، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

[1] Bayān Talbīs Al-Jahmiyyah fī Taʾsīs Bidaʿihim Al-Kalāmiyyah, Ṭ. Majmaʿ Al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat Al-Muṣḥaf ash-Sharīf, 5/513.

[2] Sahih Al-Bukhari 50

That you worship Allāh as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then indeed He sees you.

The meaning of the *Hadīth* is that *Ihsān* is to worship Allāh ﷻ as if you see Him, and if you can't achieve this state of devotion, then a step below that Allāh ﷻ sees him. One who worships Allāh ﷻ as if he's seeing Allāh ﷻ, that's referred to as *Maqām Al-Mushāhid*. The second state or level in the *Hadīth*, the one who worships Allāh ﷻ knowing that Allāh ﷻ sees him, that's called *Maqām Al-Ikhlās wal-Murāqabah*. If you pay attention, there's a delicate difference in the second, which is that *Maqām Al- Ikhlās* is a lesser rank that *Maqām Al-Mushāhadah*. We're trying to attain *Maqām Al-Mushāhadah* throughout our life. The *Hadīth* serves as a foundation, goal, and a treasure for those who want to please Allāh ﷻ and worship Him. It's the practice of the virtuous.

We must reach that high level of *Yaqīn* and *Īmān* in Allāh ﷻ to feel as if you are seeing Allāh ﷻ. Imagine someone living his life worshiping Allāh ﷻ as if he's seeing Him. That type of lifestyle would foster the highest level of respect, fear, humility, reverence, and sincerity to Allāh ﷻ. The worship of someone at this status would be in the best possible way.

If you truly feel as if you are seeing Allāh ﷻ, then you'll be profoundly aware of all your actions, of all your speech, and even your fleeting thoughts. You'll think twice before doing something that might displease Allāh ﷻ, because you want to show respect to Allāh ﷻ. This level of *'Ubūdīyyah* goes beyond just the physical *'Ibādāt* and Tarawīh and *Qiyām* and fasting, it encompasses every part of our lives since our whole existence in this *Dunyā* was meant for *'Ubūdīyyah*.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ٥٦﴾

And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except to worship Me. (aḏ-Ḏāriyāt:56)

When it comes to speech, you speak as if you're seeing Allāh ﷻ. What's the result? You would select the words that you want Allāh ﷻ to hear from you. You would choose the words that you would be proud to stand before Allāh ﷻ with. When you're doing something and your heart is at a status where it's as if you're seeing Allāh ﷻ, that will inspire you to act in a way you would feel proud to show Allāh ﷻ. An individual who reaches this state will even be mindful of their own thoughts. You'll find that your thoughts are now focused on Allāh ﷻ, they pertain to Allāh ﷻ.

Any negative thought might make you feel embarrassed because you're at this high status now. It's a cure for show-off and other heart illnesses. Someone who worships Allāh ﷻ as if he sees Him might perform his *Salāh*, charity, engage in *Jihād*, and other public actions and he can be genuine, pure, and sincere because all they can see in their actions is Allāh ﷻ. They focus solely on Allāh ﷻ, they see no one else, even if the whole world is present around them. This status of *Ihsān*, to worship Allāh ﷻ as if you see Him, relates everything back to Allāh ﷻ. When someone gives you, a person at this status will see it as if Allāh ﷻ is the one who's giving — and he actually is.

Yūsuf ﷺ was referred to as being among the *Muhsinīn*, and he was referred to as being among the *Muhsinīn* in many verses in the *Qur'ān* in practically all stages in his life. When he was a youth,

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُۥٓ وَٱسْتَوَىٰٓ ءَاتَيْنَـٰهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿ ٱلْقَصَص: ١٤ ﴾

And when he attained his full strength and was (mentally) mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge. And thus do We reward the Muhsinīn. (al-Ḳaṣaṣ:14)

When he was in prison,

...نَبِّئۡنَا بِتَأۡوِيلِهِۦٓۖ إِنَّا نَرَىٰكَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ﴿ يُوسُف: ٣٦﴾

Inform us of its interpretation; indeed, we see you to be of the Muhsinīn. (Yūsuf:36)

When he was reuniting with his family, he said,

قَالُوٓاْ أَءِنَّكَ لَأَنتَ يُوسُفُۖ قَالَ أَنَا۠ يُوسُفُ وَهَٰذَآ أَخِي قَدۡ مَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡنَآۖ إِنَّهُۥ مَن يَتَّقِ وَيَصۡبِرۡ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجۡرَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ﴿ يُوسُف: ٩٠﴾

I am Yūsuf, and this is my brother. Allāh has certainly favoured us. Indeed, he who fears Allāh *and is patient, then indeed,* Allāh *does not allow to be lost the reward of the Muhsinīn. (Yūsuf:90)*

And also,

قَالُواْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلۡعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُۥٓ أَبٗا شَيۡخٗا كَبِيرٗا فَخُذۡ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُۥٓۖ إِنَّا نَرَىٰكَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ﴿ يُوسُف: ٧٨﴾

They said, "O ʿAzīz, indeed he has a father [who is] an old man, so take one of us in place of him. Indeed, we see you as being from the Muhsinīn." (Yūsuf:90)

When he was established on this earth after he was released from prison,

وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنۡهَا حَيۡثُ يَشَآءُۚ نُصِيبُ بِرَحۡمَتِنَا مَن نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجۡرَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ﴿ يُوسُف: ٥٦﴾

And thus We established Yūsuf in the land to settle therein wherever he willed. We touch with Our mercy whom We will, and We do not allow to be lost the reward of the Muhsinīn. (Yūsuf:56)

He's among the *Muhsinīn*, and a person of that status sees everything good as coming only from Allāh ﷻ. When he was released, there were many means he could have attributed his release to — he served his time, the dream, the king realizes the truth — but Yūsuf ﷺ, who's among the *Muhsinīn*, praised Allāh ﷻ for his freedom and kindness to him and releasing him alone.

...وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِيٓ إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِى مِنَ ٱلسِّجْنِ وَجَآءَ بِكُم مِّنَ ٱلْبَدْوِ...﴿ يُوسُف: ١٠٠﴾

And He was certainly good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (here) from Bedouin life… (Yūsuf:90)

Allāh ﷻ alone took me out of prison.

وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِيٓ

And He was certainly good to me…

He's among the *Muhsinīn*, so Allāh ﷻ granted him reward for his *Ihsān* in this *Dunyā* by relieving him from his suffering —

وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِيٓ

And He was certainly good to me…

And you take from that that a person of this status, Allāh ﷻ will return the goodness upon him in this *Dunyā*, as well as the *Ākhirah*. And if you're denied, a *Muhsin* accepts that as part of Allāh ﷻ's Plan. People

wronged you, Allāh ﷻ allowed that to happen, He may have allowed it as a form of discipline, to forgive a sin, or possibly to raise your rank. And when others treat you well, a person who reaches this status acknowledges that it's Allāh ﷻ's kindness that He softened their heart towards you.

When I have food, it's not from my job or from my salary, it's not from a donor or from the grocery store or various other means, a *Muhsin* sees it from Allāh ﷻ. Everything is about Allāh ﷻ. Ibrāhīm ﷺ credited his sustenance and beverages to Allāh ﷻ, despite the various means to acquire them.

وَٱلَّذِى هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِى وَيَسْقِينِ﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ٧٩﴾

And it is He who feeds me and gives me drink. (aš-Šūrā:79)

He credited his recovery from illness to Allāh ﷻ, despite the presence of doctors and other medical remedies and resources. He said,

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ٨٠﴾

And when I am ill, it is He who cures me. (aš-Šūrā:80)

Allāh ﷻ taught us this in the *Qur'ān* in many verses.

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَـٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ...﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال: ١٧﴾

You didn't kill them, but Allāh ﷻ killed them… (al-ʾAnfāl:17)

And he told Muhammad ﷺ it wasn't you who threw when you threw, it was Allāh ﷻ who threw,

...وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَـٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَمَىٰ...﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال: ١٧﴾

And you threw not, when you threw, but it was Allāh who threw. (al-ʾAnfāl:17)

Allāh ﷻ said,

قَـٰتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبْهُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ...﴿ ٱلتَّوْبَة: ١٤﴾

Fight them; Allāh will punish them by your hands… (at-Tawbah:14)

Fight them, Allāh will punish them. You're fighting, but Allāh ﷻ said He will punish them. The verses like that are many, and that's not to deny the means, but a person of *Ihsān* sees the Lord of the means rather than the means. The vision in the heart of someone worshipping Allāh ﷻ as if he sees Him, is stronger than his actual vision of seeing the means. Everything good, he sees is attributed to Allāh ﷻ, because Allāh ﷻ is the One who can disable the means, he sees the One Who disables the means. He sees the One Who can create obstacles that prevent the means. He sees everything under the control of Allāh ﷻ, and the ultimate praise returns to Allāh ﷻ.

Envision an individual who achieves this esteemed status in how he feels of sweetness in his *'Ibādah*. Many, or most, may struggle to achieve *Khushū'* in *Salāh* when standing before Allāh ﷻ, even by the *Ka'bah*. A person who worships Allāh ﷻ as if he sees Him will find that his *Khushū'* begins when he contemplates about starting to prepare for *Salāh*. At the *Adhān*, people are talking and mindless of the *Adhān*, he's in *Khushū'* listening and repeating after the *Mu'adhin*. In *Wudū'* he has *Khushū'*, in *Nawāfil* and in *Fard*, he will feel *Dhul* and *Khudū'* and *Khushū'* like no other, because Allāh ﷻ is always present in his heart as if he sees Him. Those who reach this status are the happiest, most peaceful, most pure in their spirit. No anxiety or worries, because they've made their lives about Allāh ﷻ. Their concern becomes solely cantered on *'Ubūdīyyah*, no distractions. If there are any *Dunyā* distractions, it would be to attain

means in order to strengthen their *'Ibādah* journey to Allāh ﷻ, and they even transform those means or distractions into an *'Ibādah*.

Ihsān is to worship Allāh ﷻ as if you see Him, and that's an entire way of life. Look at the reward.

إِنَّ ٱلۡمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّٰتٖ وَعُيُونٍ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ١٥﴾

Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs,
(aḏ-Ḏāriyāt:15)

ءَاخِذِينَ مَآ ءَاتَىٰهُمۡ رَبُّهُمۡۚ إِنَّهُمۡ كَانُواْ قَبۡلَ ذَٰلِكَ مُحۡسِنِينَ ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ١٦﴾

Accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that Muhsinīn. (aḏ-Ḏāriyāt:16)

They're in *Jannātin wa-'uyūn*. Their reward is gardens with springs, and they're enjoying everything Allāh ﷻ's giving them. Allāh gives them and they're enjoying it.

ءَاخِذِينَ مَآ ءَاتَىٰهُمۡ رَبُّهُمۡۚ إِنَّهُمۡ كَانُواْ قَبۡلَ ذَٰلِكَ مُحۡسِنِينَ ﴿ ٱلذَّارِيَات: ١٦﴾

Accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that Muhsinīn. (aḏ-Ḏāriyāt:16)

Because they were among the *Muhsinīn*. It's your ticket to *Jannah*. But, given that *Ihsān* is the pinnacle of worship, you can expect not just *Jannah*, but something higher and mightier in *Jannah* as well. Allāh ﷻ said,

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحۡسَنُواْ ٱلۡحُسۡنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٞۖ...﴿ يُونُس: ٢٦﴾

For them who have done good is the best [reward] - and extra. (Yūnus:26)

For the *Muhsinīn*, two things for them. The first one is *Al-Husnā*, which means *Jannah*. *Husnā* here means *Jannah*. *Wa Ziyādah* means "and more", and more means seeing Allāh ﷻ. *Ihsān* involves a believer worshiping Allāh ﷻ as if he sees Him. So the reward is really actually seeing Allāh ﷻ in *Jannah*.

هَلْ جَزَآءُ ٱلْإِحْسَـٰنِ إِلَّا ٱلْإِحْسَـٰنُ ﴿ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰن: ٦٠﴾

Is the reward for good [anything] but good? (ar-Raḥmān:60)

The ultimate reward and honour for the pinnacle of worship is the pinnacle bliss in *Jannah*, which is actually seeing Allāh ﷻ. The reward is similar in nature to their *'Ibādah* in this *Dunyā*. You worshipped Him as if you see Him, therefore in *Jannah*, you will see Him. We ask Allāh ﷻ to grant us the status of the *Muhsinīn* and the ultimate pleasure of looking at Allāh ﷻ in *Jannah*.

The Foundation of All Worship; The Love of Allāh

We spoke about the honour of *'Ubūdīyyah*, and then we spoke about how one starts his path of *'Ubūdīyyah* with knowledge of Allāh ﷻ. Then, we mentioned the ultimate level and state of *'Ubūdīyyah* that we all need to strive for. Then, we mentioned how desperate we are and how we need Allāh ﷻ. Now, among the most important heart *'Ibādāt*, the head of *'Ibādah*, the foundation of all foundations of *'Ibādah*, and a matter that the *Dīn* is built upon — this *'Ibādah* is the *'Ibādah* of the love of Allāh ﷻ. Loving Allāh is one of the most important duties of *Īmān*, and it's a key principle of *Īmān*.

It's the reality, essence, and foundation of *'Ibādah*, *Īmān*, and *Tawhīd*. It's the foundation of all actions of this *Dīn.* It's an essential condition of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*. Without the love of Allāh ﷻ, there's no true *Tawhīd*, there's no true *Īmān*, there's no guidance, there's no success. Consider this: If it's established, as we all know, that a believer is not truly a believer until the Messenger ﷺ is more cherished and more loved to him than his own self, his own child, his own father, and all of humanity — if that's the case, then reflect on the depth of the love one needs to have for Allāh ﷻ. The love one holds for Allāh ﷻ should surpass the love for water in a situation where an individual experiences an overwhelming thirst; the love he holds for Allāh ﷻ should surpass the love for water in such a circumstance. In the weak narration in Sunan At-Tirmidhi[1],

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبكَ وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ
اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي وَأَهْلِي وَمِنَ المَاءِ الْبَارِدِ

I ask you, Yā Allāh, for Your Love and the love of those who You love and to perform actions that will attain me Your Love. Yā Allāh, *make your Love more beloved to me than myself, my family, and cold water.*

[1] Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Ṭ. al-Risālah, 6/99

The Love of Allāh ﷻ represents the most accessible route to *Jannah*. The *Sahābah* expressed immense joy when they realized that the love of Allāh ﷻ would enable them to be with Him in *Jannah*. They experienced a level of happiness and joy that was unmatched in their lives following their conversion to *Islām*. Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[1] and Muslim[2], on the authority of Anas ﷺ, a man asked the Messenger ﷺ, "When is the Day of Judgement?" The Messenger ﷺ said, "What have you prepared for it?" He wanted to teach him a lesson. The man said, "Nothing, except that I love Allāh and His Messenger." The Messenger ﷺ said,

أَنْتَ مَعَ مَنْ أَحْبَبتَ

You will be with those whom you love.

Anas ﷺ, the narrator of the *Hadīth* said,

ما رأَيْتُ المُسلِّمينَ فرِّحوا بشيءٍ بعدَ الإسلامِّ مِّثْلَ فرَحِّهم بها

After their faith in Islām, nothing brought the Sahābah greater joy (than knowing they will be with those whom they love).[3]

Love of Allāh ﷻ nourishes the heart and feeds the soul. It brings joy to your heart and brings delight to your eyes. Worshiping Allāh ﷻ without the *'Ibādah* of loving Allāh ﷻ is like a body with no soul. Without love, a person is like a living dead. Without the love of Allāh ﷻ, it's like a person who's lost in darkness. *Tawhīd* cannot be complete without the servant's love for Allāh ﷻ. Love for Allāh ﷻ should guide and rule all other forms of love, take priority over them, and dominate them. The love of Allāh ﷻ transcends and oversees all other forms of love.

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[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 3688

[2] Sahih Muslim 2639

[3] Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 6/180

Material wealth and various other concerns that we cherish can overwhelm our hearts, and when they do so, they displace our love for Allāh ﷻ. Material possessions and other things that we cherish can fill our hearts, and they can fill our hearts so much that they will push out the love of Allāh ﷻ. One may possess wealth, children, and all that which he desires without prioritizing the love of Allāh ﷻ in his heart, that person will experience a sense of constriction and unease in his heart, no matter what he has. If one possesses the love of Allāh ﷻ, they have lost nothing; and if one has everything, yet lacks the love of Allāh ﷻ, then in reality they possess nothing. There's no greater source of joy and fulfilment for those in pursuit of true happiness than the love for Allāh ﷻ and the aspiration to earn His Pleasure.

This love is the key to the servant's honour and happiness and success in the *Dunyā* and in the *Ākhirah*. Those who embrace the love of Allāh ﷻ gain honour in both this *Dunyā* and in the *Ākhirah*, because they have a special bond with the One they love. The love of Allāh ﷻ is a *Fitrah* of the hearts.

It's inconceivable for an untainted heart that comprehends the Names and Attributes of Allāh ﷻ, along with the impact they have on us, and the blessings Allāh bestows upon us, to not develop a profound love for Allāh ﷻ. The love for Allāh ﷻ varies based on one's *Īmān*, and you love Allāh ﷻ by learning about Him.

...وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُۥ ظَٰهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً...﴿ لُقْمَان: ٢٠﴾

...and [He] amply bestowed upon you His favours, [both] apparent and unapparent?... (Luqmān:20)

وَمَا بِكُم مِّن نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ ٱللَّهِ...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ٥٣﴾

And whatever you have of favour - it is from Allāh...(an-Naḥl:53)

If we attempt to enumerate all of Allāh ﷻ's Blessings, we would find it an impossible task. Allāh ﷻ informed us that counting all His Blessings is beyond our capabilities and it's truly unfeasible. In Sūrat An-Nahl and Sūrat Ibrāhīm, two times,

وَإِن تَعُدُّواْ نِعْمَةَ ٱللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَآ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ١٨﴾

And if you should count the favours of Allāh, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allāh *is Forgiving and Merciful. (an-Naḥl:53)*

And in the other one,

...وَإِن تَعُدُّواْ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَآ إِنَّ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿ إِبْرَاهِيم: ٣٤﴾

And if you should count the favour [i.e., blessings] of Allāh, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful. (ʾIbrāhīm:34)

It's impossible to truly understand Allāh ﷻ without developing a profound love for Him. Although individuals may hold esteemed positions, such as professors, nuclear scientists, and physicians, they may lack knowledge of Allāh ﷻ, so they are, in reality, ignorant.

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَـٰهِرًا مِّنَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ هُمْ غَـٰفِلُونَ﴿ ٱلرُّوم: ٧﴾

They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they, of the Hereafter, are unaware. (ar-Rūm:7)

Sometimes when you receive a gift or you get assistance during a difficult time, something as simple as maybe someone stopping on the

highway to help you change a flat tire, it can make you feel like you owe that person something for the rest of your life. Imagine what Allāh ﷻ has given you. Bakr Al-Muzani, a *Tābi'ī* said, "Son of Ādam, if you wish to understand the extent of Allāh ﷻ's blessings upon you, then simply close your eyes."[1] How can one not hold love for the One who has granted him abundant blessings?

What others provide is in reality a *Ni'mah* from Allāh ﷻ. Recognizing and realizing that all that you have received is from Allāh ﷻ is in and of itself a blessing which you should express gratitude for. Your thanking and glorifying of Allāh ﷻ for the favours He granted you constitutes yet another blessing which you need to be thankful for. The 'Abbāsi poet Mahmūd Al-Warrāq said,

شُكْرُ الْإِلَهِ نِعْمَةٌ ، مُوجِبَةٌ لِشُكْرِهِ

The expression of gratitude towards Allāh ﷻ is in and of itself a blessing that warrants recognition and appreciation.[2]

When one reaches a profound level of love for Allāh ﷻ, it becomes evident that what Allāh ﷻ takes away from him is in fact a blessing He bestowed upon him. When He removes, for example, wealth or health or a spouse or subjects you to some type of hardship, it's a blessing that He's granting you, a higher rank that you're attaining, or a benefit that you don't know about that you're receiving. He deprived you of something to give you something better.

وَءَاتَىٰكُم مِّن كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ...﴿ إِبْرَاهِيم: ٣٤﴾

And He gave you from all you asked of Him…(ʾIbrāhīm:34)

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[1] Al-Shukr li Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, Ṭ. Al-Maktab Al-Islāmī, 1/62

[2] Dīwān Maḥmūd al-Warrāq, Ṭ. Muʾassasat al-Funūn 1/224

The complete absence of the love of Allāh ﷻ constitutes the departure from *Islām*. This matter is so critical that loving anyone or anything as you love Allāh ﷻ or the way you should love Allāh ﷻ, is *Shirk*. Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "*Shirk* in love is to love other than Allāh ﷻ like you love Allāh ﷻ, and that's the *Shirk* that Allāh ﷻ will not forgive."[1] It's what the people of Quraysh were considered Mushrikīn for.

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ...﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة: ١٦٥﴾

And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allāh as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allāh. (al-Baqarah:165)

From among mankind are some who worship others besides Allāh ﷻ as rivals to Allāh ﷻ,

يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ

They love them as they love Allāh ﷻ.

This verse shows that they love Allāh ﷻ because the verse says,

يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ

They love them as they love Allāh ﷻ.

But they love their idols like they love Allāh ﷻ, and they were Mushrikīn for loving them like they love Allāh ﷻ. Imagine if someone

[1] Jalāʾ Al-Afhām, Ṭ. Dār Al-ʿUrūbah, 1/186

loves something more than he loves Allāh or if he loves something aside and totally apart from loving Allāh ﷻ as he should love Allāh.

تَٱللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِى ضَلَـٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ٩٧﴾

By Allāh, we were indeed in manifest error, (aš-Šūrā:97)

إِذْ نُسَوِّيكُم بِرَبِّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ﴿ ٱلشُّورىٰ: ٩٨﴾

When we equated you with the Lord of the worlds. (aš-Šūrā:98)

They made their false gods equal to Allāh ﷻ in their love towards them. A weak or diminished love for Allāh ﷻ can result in committing sins, along with experiencing various other heart ailments, anxiety, and trials in life. Love of Allāh ﷻ is a remedy for all the ailments of the heart, and without it, life would be filled with worries and pain.

Increasing and strengthening the love of Allāh ﷻ motivates one towards obedience. Boosting and deepening the love of Allāh ﷻ acts as a powerful motivator for following His Commands and refraining from the *Harām*. It inspires individuals to put in their best effort. This is what the early believers strove for and it's where genuine devotees commit themselves. A person will only give up what they love and desire for something else they love even more. They will choose to let go of the weaker love in favour of the stronger love. That's why the love of Allāh ﷻ needs to be at its peak. When you truly love Allāh ﷻ, you're easily able to follow the Commands of Allāh ﷻ and you're easily able to refrain from the *Harām* and from the desires that you have.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "Love of Allāh ﷻ can be likened to a tree that's firmly rooted in the heart of every believer. When that tree is nourished with the water of sincerity and adherence to the teachings of the

Messenger ﷺ, it yields various fruits to the believers at all times."[1] The love of Allāh ﷻ will let you endure the difficulties of this life with a smile on your face and contentment in your heart.

The reason why the *Sahābah* and the righteous people throughout history were so eager to sacrifice their limbs, wealth, lives, and souls was their deep love for Allāh ﷻ — and of course it's combined with fear from Him as well. The dismemberment of limbs transformed into a source of joy when it was for the love of Allāh ﷻ. Who would boast and make poems about severed limbs while his limbs are actually being severed if it wasn't for the love of Allāh ﷻ?

وَلَسْتُ أُبَالِي حِينَ أُقْتَلُ مُسْلِمًا ، عَلَى أَيِّ شِقٍّ كَانَ لِلهِ مَصْرَعِي

When I am being martyred as a Muslim, I do not care in what way I receive my death for Allāh's Sake,

وَذَلِكَ فِي ذَاتِ الْإِلَهِ وَإِنْ يَشَأْ ، يُبَارِكْ عَلَى أَوْصَالِ شِلْوٍ مُمَزَّعِ

For that is for the sake of Allāh's very Self; and if He will, He will bestow His Blessings upon the torn pieces of my body.[2]

When the *Sahābah* gave up their time and wealth and lives and went through pain and struggles on this path, do you honestly believe they didn't love their wives and children? They did! But they understood that loving Allāh ﷻ is the most important love, so they sacrificed everything for that love. They understood that the love of Allāh ﷻ governs all love. The discomfort of swollen feet endured from standing for hours at night in *'Ibādah* to Allāh ﷻ was overshadowed by the profound love they had for Allāh. The discomfort of hunger and thirst that's experienced during

[1] Madārij Al-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/369; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/11

[2] Sahih Al-Bukhari 7402

fasting and in *Ramadān* transforms into a source of joy due to the love of Allāh ﷻ. Abu Muhammad ‘Abdullāh Ibn Muhammad Ibn Al-’Abbās Al-Makki Al-Fākihi[1] and also Ibn Al-Jawzi in Sifat As-Safwā[2] related on the authority of ‘Abd Al-’Azīz Ibn Abi Rawād that a woman left Khurasān. She left Khurasān and she headed towards Makkah and she kept asking on the way,

أَيْنَ بَيْتُ رَبِّي؟ أَيْنَ بَيْتُ رَبِّي؟

Where’s my Lord’s House? Where’s my Lord’s House?

Imagine the difficulties she endured on a journey from Khurasān to Makkah — look at the map — but her mind was focused on the love of Allāh ﷻ, so it made the journey seem as if she’s going from her house to her neighbour’s house, and she kept saying, *Ayna baytu Rabbī?* — “Where is the House of my Lord?” They told her, “You’ll see your Lord’s House very soon.” Once they entered *Al-Masjid Al-Harām* in Makkah, they said, “That’s your Lord’s House.” She began to say,

بَيْتُ رَبِّي! بَيْتُ رَبِّي!

My Lord’s House! My Lord’s House!

She leaned against the *Ka’bah* and placed her cheek on the *Ka’bah* and continued to cry until she died. Her love and longing for her Lord consumed her. If that’s her deep desire and love for the House of Allāh ﷻ, can you imagine how deep her love for Allāh ﷻ is and for seeing Him in *Jannah*? The essence of sweetness and joy, whether in acts of worship

[1] Akhbār Makkah, Ṭ. Dār Khuḍr (Fourth Print), 1/167.

[2] Ṣifat Al-Ṣafwa, Ṭ. Dār Al-Ḥadīth, 2/516.

or in *Īmān* or in life as a whole, is absent without the love of Allāh ﷻ. Ibn Al-Qayyim said in Ad-Dā' wad-Dawā[1],

مَنْ أَحَبَّ شَيْئًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ عُذِّبَ بِهِ

Whoever attaches his heart to other than Allāh ﷻ, he will be punished, he will suffer.

One who loves in *Harām*, one who loves anything other than Allāh like he's supposed to love Allāh ﷻ or more than he loves Allāh ﷻ, he will inevitably suffer because of it. Love that competes with the love of Allāh ﷻ will cause you pain. Allāh ﷻ will make you suffer because of that love. You love your child like you're supposed to love Allāh ﷻ or more? He will grow to be a disobedient son, a punishment for you in the *Dunyā* and in the *Ākhirah*.

People who love money and wealth, and they love them, they truly love them like they love Allāh ﷻ or more, and then they deny Allāh ﷻ's obligation regarding that, on the Day of Judgement they will suffer because of this. There are many *Āyāt* and *Ahādīth* on that. They will also suffer in this life. They will experience stress, sadness, and frustration while trying to acquire that wealth. When they finally obtain it and they think, "Now we got the wealth, we can relax", their worry only grows and their anxiety only deepens. They constantly strive for more and they will never feel satisfied. They will always feel like they haven't achieved anything. They believe they always have a long way to go to gather more and more wealth. They live in fear and in anxiety about losing their wealth or that something may happen to it, and that causes them to be constantly on edge. If they lose some of the wealth or they face a setback, they become overwhelmed with distress and dissatisfaction.

And similar to that are those who suffer from the pain of forbidden love, the *Harām* love, they're among the most miserable and burdened

[1] Al-Dāʾ wa Al-Dawāʾ, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/492; Ṭ. Dār Al-Maʿrifah, 1/213

individuals that you can see. If their beloved one is far away, they'll experience deep sorrow that's hard to describe. Their longing and yearning can leave them in a pitiful state. If their beloved is close to them, they still feel anxiety and sadness. They fear separation, they fear distance, they fear betrayal, the thought of losing their love can be overwhelming because separation is inevitable — it's going to happen either through death, betrayal, jealousy, or simply growing tired of each other. So among the most miserable people are those who love in *Harām*. They're miserable even if love itself is sweet. They're crying and sad all the time because of fear of parting or they're consumed by feuding and longing for that person.

Steps to Love Allāh

Recite the Qur'ān

Last talk, we answered the question about the factors that lead to loving Allāh ﷻ. The question we were addressing was, "What are the practical steps that lead to loving Allāh ﷻ?" And we said in the last talk what I repeated throughout many other talks, which was that the number one way to love Allāh ﷻ is to learn about Allāh ﷻ and the *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻ. The most significant, righteous deed that fosters and cultivates love of Allāh ﷻ is the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ's Blessings and connecting them to the Bestower, especially when connecting them through the Names and Qualities of Allāh ﷻ. Keep in mind that the purpose of loving Allāh ﷻ is to attain the Love of Allāh ﷻ. When you love Allāh ﷻ properly, it's reciprocated.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَن يَرۡتَدَّ مِنكُمۡ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَسَوۡفَ يَأۡتِي ٱللَّهُ بِقَوۡمٖ يُحِبُّهُمۡ وَيُحِبُّونَهُۥٓ... ﴿ ٱلۡمَائِدَة: ٥٤﴾

O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allāh will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him…(al-Māʾidah:54)

When the *Sahābi* that we spoke about loved Allāh ﷻ and expressed it through Sūrat Al-*Ikhlās*, Allāh ﷻ loved him back.

So now that we know that learning about Allāh ﷻ and His Qualities is the first factor that leads to loving Allāh ﷻ, the second factor is recitation of the *Qur'ān* and recitation of the *Qur'ān* with *Tadabbur*. How can you learn about Allāh ﷻ without the Word of Allāh ﷻ, without guidance from Allāh ﷻ?

The *Qur'ān* imparts knowledge regarding the Attributes and Names that we previously discussed. The last topic cannot be attained except by learning it from the *Qur'ān*. The *Qur'ān* elucidates what befits Allāh ﷻ and what doesn't. It teaches the commands and prohibitions. It instructs one on how to earn Allāh ﷻ's Love and how to attain His Pleasure. It teaches you to stay away from what Allāh ﷻ dislikes so that you will not be disliked by Him. In the *Qur'ān*, for example, there are sixteen verses that articulate the Qualities of those loved by Allāh ﷻ. One who loves Allāh ﷻ and one who wants Allāh ﷻ to love him follows the actions described in those verses.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَـٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُم بُنْيَـٰنٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ ﴿ٱلصَّفّ: ٤﴾

Indeed, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly. (aṣ-Ṣaff:4)

...فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿آلِ عِمْرَان: ٧٦﴾

...Indeed, Allāh loves those who fear Him. (ʾĀli ʿImrān:76)

...وَٱللَّهُ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿آلِ عِمْرَان: ١٣٤﴾

...And Allāh loves the doers of good. (ʾĀli ʿImrān:134)

And there are sixteen similar verses like that and there are another sixteen verses pertaining to what Allāh ﷻ dislikes.

...فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ ﴿آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٢﴾

...Indeed, Allāh does not like the disbelievers. (ʾĀli ʿImrān:32)

...إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿لُقْمَان: ١٨﴾

Indeed, Allāh does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful. (Luqmān:18)

Now, in order to love Allāh ﷻ through the *Qur'ān* and to attain the love of Allāh ﷻ, you need to understand the *Qur'ān*. To truly love Allāh ﷻ, it's essential to comprehend and reflect upon what you recite, and that's what we refer to as the *Tadabbur* of the *Qur'ān*. During the previous *Ramadān*, I spoke about the merits of speed reading compared to slow reading with contemplation. We talked about which method is better based on the times when the reward is increased, like during *Ramadān*. However, to cultivate a genuine love for Allāh ﷻ in one's heart through the recitation of the *Qur'ān* and to receive the love of Allāh ﷻ, it's essential to recite the *Qur'ān* with contemplation, comprehension, understanding, reflection, and even to beautify your voice as much as you can.

We had the *Tafsīr* class and we were going over *Sūrat Al-Fātihah* and we reached approximately sixteen lessons in *Sūrat Al-Fātihah* alone. Many don't understand the basic meaning of a *Sūrah* that's recited seventeen times a day by *Fard*, the most significant *Sūrah* in the *Qur'ān*, a *Sūrah* so essential that it's considered the summary and outline of the *Qur'ān*. How can you love Allāh ﷻ without knowing the meaning of a *Sūrah* like that? Consider a scenario where your supervisor sends you an email with specific instructions to do something. If you quickly skim through that email or letter or you read it slowly but you don't understand what you read, you're going to be uncertain about what's required of you, you won't know what to perform for your supervisor. That's going to jeopardize your job.

...وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَثَلُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ٦٠﴾

...And Allāh ﷻ has the Supreme Examples... (an-Naḥl:60)

To truly love Allāh ﷻ through recitation of the *Qur'ān*, you must engage in deep contemplation of the verses. When reciting the *Qur'ān*, it's essential to cultivate a sense of personal connection, as if the *Qur'ān* is addressing you personally and individually. When one reaches the level of feeling that the *Qur'ān* is addressing him personally, the desire to complete the *Sūrah* and *Juz'* and to put the *Qur'ān* away diminishes. Instead, you'll find joy in every single letter and in every single verse and you won't get enough from the *Qur'ān*. You would have Ibn Kathīr by your side to explore the meanings of unfamiliar verses to enhance your experience in reciting the *Qur'ān*. Contemplating the *Qur'ān* means you recognize that you are personally addressed by the words of Allāh ﷻ.

You should recite and listen to the *Qur'ān* with the ear of your heart, and you need to reflect upon the *Qur'ān* with the eye of your soul. When you comprehend Allāh ﷻ's Message and allow your heart to absorb the meaning, you then fulfill the commands and avoid the prohibitions. This type of recitation will then manifest in your demeanour, it'll shape your character, and it will be evident in your speech and in your actions.

The Messenger ﷺ's entire life and character was the *Qur'ān*. When you read a few verses or a page from the *Qur'ān*, your daily Word of the *Qur'ān*, ask what you got about Allāh ﷻ's Qualities, Attributes, Commands, Stories, and what Allāh ﷻ loves and what He dislikes. When the influence of the *Qur'ān* meets a receptive heart and the listener is fully attentive without distractions and preoccupations, the result of reciting the *Qur'ān* will then be effective and the person will then benefit from what he reads.

What can draw someone nearer to Allāh ﷻ than what Allāh ﷻ revealed? The deeper a person's love for Allāh ﷻ, the more they'll cherish His book, and the more frequently they'll recite it. When someone is deeply in love with their spouse, they'll cherish every message they receive from them. They'll read a text or a letter that's sent by them repeatedly. They'll find joy in reading those messages, they'll find joy in

seeing those messages, and just seeing those messages will bring that person comfort and peace, because it's from someone that they truly love.

The *Salaf* recited the *Qur'ān* like a message from a long-lost love filled with anticipation and longing. An-Nawawi in his book At-Tibyān fi Ādāb Hamalat Al-Qur'ān[1] mentions that Al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali ﷺ mentioned that those who came before saw the *Qur'ān* as a message from their Lord, and they would reflect on it night and day. During the night they would reflect on it and during the day they would study it.

To truly benefit from the *Qur'ān*, pay close attention while reading and listening to it, and let your heart be present as if you are the one being spoken to by Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ is addressing you through His Words. The Book of Allāh is from Allāh, anyone who wants to love Allāh ﷻ will have a deep affection for His Words and he'll always seek to recite the word of Allāh ﷻ, never getting enough of it. Look at the *Tadabbur* of Rasūlallāh ﷺ when reciting or hearing the *Qur'ān*. In Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[2] and Muslim[3], he told 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ to recite, and when he reached the verse in *Sūrat An-Nisā'*,

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍۭ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ شَهِيدًا ﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ٤١﴾

So how [will it be] when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you, [O Muhammad], against these [people] as a witness? (an-Nisāʾ:41)

He told him, "Stop." Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ observed the eyes of the Messenger ﷺ overflowing with tears — ﷺ. That's contemplating the *Qur'ān*. Let the meaning sink into your heart. If you come across a

[1] Al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalat Al-Qurʾān, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1/54

[2] Sahih Al-Bukhari 5050

[3] Sahih Muslim 800

warning, then you should fear Allāh ﷻ. If it's a verse about mercy, ask Allāh ﷻ for His Mercy. If it's a verse praising Allāh ﷻ, then glorify Allāh ﷻ. In one of the Messenger ﷺ's nightly *Qiyām*, he recited *Al-Baqarah*, then *An-Nisā'*, then *Āl 'Imrān*. What's mightier than the quantity and the length of that *Qiyām* is that the *Hadīth*[1] said,

يَقْرَأُ مُتَرَسِّلًا

Reciting slowly.

He recited it slowly, unhurried, with contemplation. That's *Tadabbur*. What's even mightier than that is whenever he recited a verse about glorifying Allāh ﷻ, he glorified Him. That's *Tadabbur*. When he reached a verse about supplication, he made supplication. When he reached a verse that spoke about seeking refuge with Allāh ﷻ, he sought refuge with Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ said,

كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿ص: ٢٩﴾

(This is) a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, (O Muhammad), that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded. (Ṣād:29)

The *Qur'ān* was sent down upon you full of blessings, for what purpose? For voice competitions? To decorate the walls with it? To read it quickly without understanding it?

لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ

[1] Sahih Muslim 772

That they might reflect upon its verses

The purpose is to ponder, reflect, and understand the verses, and of course then to apply them. One needs to feel the honour of having the *Qur'ān*, of reciting the *Qur'ān*. It's an honour that surpasses all others.

According to Ibn *As-Salāh*, he said that it's an honour that the angels didn't even receive.[1] Some *Ulamā'* dispute that but it still shows what an honour it is for us to have the *Qur'ān*. In fact, Allāh ﷻ said,

وَإِنَّهُۥ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ ﴿ ٱلزُّخْرُف: ٤٤﴾

And certainly, this (Qur'ān) is a word of honour *for you and your people…(az-Zukhruf:44)*

Befriending the *Qur'ān* is a privilege and honour like no other. When you befriend the *Qur'ān*, it guides you to love Allāh ﷻ, and in return, Allāh ﷻ will love you. That will lead to the highest levels of *Jannah*. The litmus test for loving Allāh ﷻ is the love for the Words of Allāh ﷻ. Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ who learned the *Qur'ān* first-hand from the Messenger ﷺ, the *Sahābi* who the Messenger ﷺ used to ask to recite the *Qur'ān* so he could listen to him, as we just mentioned — the Messenger ﷺ said about him, "Whoever would like to recite the *Qur'ān* fresh like it was revealed, then let him recite it according to the recitation of Ibn Mas'ud"[2]. So his specialty was the *Qur'ān*, he took it first-hand from the Messenger ﷺ. He provided us with the standard and benchmark to assess our love for Allāh ﷻ. In Kit'āb As-Sunnah[3] by 'Abdullāh the son of Im'ām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and also in At-Tabarāni in Al-Kabīr[4], Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said,

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[1] Al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm Al-Qurʾān, 1/358

[2] Musnad Ahmad 35

[3] Al-Sunnah li-ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Al-Qayyim, 1/148

[4] Al-Muʿjam Al-Kabīr li-Al-Ṭabarānī, Ṭ. Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 9/132

مَنْ كَانَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أَنَّهُ يُحِبُّ اللَّهَ ﷻ فَلْيَعْرِضْ نَفْسَهُ عَلَى الْقُرْآنِ فَإِنْ أَحَبَّ الْقُرْآنَ فَهُوَ يُحِبُّ اللَّهَ ﷻ فَإِنَّمَا الْقُرْآنُ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ ﷻ

Those who want to ascertain their lover for Allāh ﷻ should reflect upon their relationship with the Qur'ān. If they love the Qur'ān, it's a clear indication that they indeed love Allāh ﷻ, because the Qur'ān is the Word of Allāh ﷻ.

You must love the *Qur'ān*, it's not a matter of choice. Your heart must be filled with joy at the recitation of the *Qur'ān*. You must find comfort and reassurance when reciting the *Qur'ān*. The biggest sign that you love the *Qur'ān* is to do what you can to understand the *Qur'ān*, that's the *Tadabbur* of the *Qur'ān* − that's where the *Tadabbur* begins. Allāh condemned the hypocrites for not having *Tadabbur* of the *Qur'ān*.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَآ﴿ مُحَمَّد: ٢٤﴾

Do they not then reflect on the Qur'ān? Or are there locks upon their hearts? (Muḥammad:24)

In another verse,

أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُواْ ٱلْقَوْلَ...﴿ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُون: ٦٨﴾

Then have they not reflected over the word (i.e., the Qur'ān)?... (al-Muʾminūn:68)

The *Barakah* of the *Qur'ān* is in its treasures. If you pursue the treasures of the *Qur'ān*, you will not find those treasures without the *Tadabbur* of the *Qur'ān*. When you recite the tens of verses concerning the heavens and the earth after learning the meaning, you'll reflect on the greatness of Allāh ﷻ and you'll perceive *Allāh*ﷻ's Powers in everything that surrounds you. When you recite a verse like

أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا تُمْنُونَ﴿ ٱلْوَاقِعَة: ٥٨﴾

Have you considered the semen that you ejaculate? (al-Wāqiʿah:58)

Have you considered that verse? *Tadabbur* is to realize how that semen turns into a clot, and that clot turns into a lump of flesh, the lump of flesh turns into bones that are clothed with flesh, and that's how Allāh ﷻ, the Best of Creators, brings creation into this universe. Bishr Ibn As-Sarīy said,

إِنَّمَا الْآيَةُ مِثْلُ التَّمْرَةِ كُلَّمَا مَضَغْتَهَا اسْتَخْرَجْتَ حَلَاوَتَهَا

The verse is akin to a date. The more you chew it, the more sweetness you extract from it.[1]

If you befriend the *Qur'ān*, the *Qur'ān* will befriend you. If you abandon the *Qur'ān*, the *Qur'ān* will abandon you. How can you not love and be attached to what protects you by the Will of Allāh ﷻ on *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah*? People are inclined to loving that which protects them. The *Qur'ān* comes to give you intercession and to defend you *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah* by the Will of Allāh ﷻ,

اقْرَءُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفِيعًا لِأَصْحَابِهِ

Recite the Qur'ān, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for its companions.[2]

li-aṣḥābihi, to those who befriend the *Qur'ān*. When one does not recite the *Qur'ān* on a daily basis, he should feel a sense of incompleteness in his life. He should feel a sense of irritation that persists until he gets his daily Word of the *Qur'ān* completed. If someone tells

[1] Al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm Al-Qurʾān, li az-Zarkashī, Ṭ. Dār Iḥyāʾ at-Turāth, 1/471

[2] Sahih Muslim 804

you, "I'll give you ten dollars for each letter you recite of the *Qur'ān*," you wouldn't miss out on that opportunity. *Sūrat Al-Fātihah* is approximately one-hundred thirty-nine letters, multiply that by ten rewards, and Allāh ﷻ multiplies the reward by as much as He wishes. How can you miss out on such an opportunity? The *Hasanāt* are worth way more than the ten dollars. They're worth more than the globe and what's in it. And I don't want to get into the topic about abandoning the *Qur'ān*, because that's an entirely different topic, but we can address it at a different time *In shā'* Allāh.

The bottom line is that the second factor on your path to attaining the love of Allāh ﷻ is to befriend the *Qur'ān* and to recite the *Qur'ān* with *Tadabbur*. You will never be able to attain the first factor that we previously spoke about without attaining this, and you will not attain the proper love of Allāh ﷻ without reciting the *Qur'ān* with *Tadabbur*.

Make it a habit to recite the *Qur'ān* daily, no matter what your schedule is about, because the *Qur'ān* will only bless your time and your life, and make it a habit to understand what you're reciting. Go back to Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr when you need to figure out the meaning of a verse, and it's available in English and in 'Arabi.

Performing Voluntary Acts

The next aspect of cultivating love for Allāh ﷻ that was highlighted by Ibn Al-Qayyim[1] is getting closer to Allāh ﷻ through *Nawāfil* (voluntary acts of *'Ibādah*) — voluntary acts, of course, after you do the obligatory ones. You do the obligatory and then you do the *Nawāfil*, and this factor, concept, or aspect is taken directly from the *Hadīth* that's in Sahīh Al-Bukhari[2]

وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِيْ بِشَيءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ ، ولايَزَالُ عَبْدِيْ يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ

My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works until I love him.

My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing the *Nawāfil* until I love him. And *Nawāfil*, we said, are voluntary acts of *'Ibādah*. *Nawāfil* are extra deeds besides what's obligatory. How does this fit into our topic? If you've been paying close attention, we're discussing ways to cultivate love for Allāh ﷻ in our hearts. Here, Ibn Al-Qayyim highlights how you can earn Allāh's Love. It appears to be two different topics. And the answer is, he's teaching you how to attain Allāh's Love for you. Whenever Allāh ﷻ loves someone, He bestows upon that person love for Allāh ﷻ, and love and *Tawfīq* to performing *'Ibādāt*.

A person who doesn't perform *Nawāfil*, gets bored of them, or just wants to finish them quickly, he isn't showing that he's trying to earn

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/18

[2] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6502

Allāh ﷻ's Love. Instead, he might be leaning towards being a hypocrite, *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*, because Allāh ﷻ said about the hypocrites,

...خَٰدِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ قَامُواْ كُسَالَىٰ يُرَآءُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ ٱللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴿ ٱلْمُنَافِقُون: ١٤٢﴾

...And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing (themselves to) the people and not remembering Allāh except a little. (al-Munāfiqūn:142)

A person who truly loves Allāh ﷻ and wants the high ranks in *Jannah* never feels satisfied with just the obligatory *'Ibādāt*. The obligatory *'Ibādāt* are not enough for them, they're always looking for additional *'Ibādāt* to perform. The greater a person's love for Allāh, the more their *Nawāfil* will be. The more the *Nawāfil* increase, the more the love for Allāh ﷻ increases. Love of Allāh ﷻ and *Nawāfil* nurture each other. It's like creating a cycle where each one supports and enhances the other. Ibn Al-Qayyim said in Madārij As-Sālikīn[1],

وَالدِّينُ كُلُّهُ اسْتِكْثَارٌ مِنَ الطَّاعَاتِ، وَأَحَبُّ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ إِلَيْهِ أَعْظَمُهُمُ اسْتِكْثَارًا مِنْهَا

Dīn is all about doing more and more Tā'āt (deeds and Nawāfil), and the ones who are most beloved by Allāh ﷻ are the ones who do the most deeds.

The *Hadīth* says

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ﷻ

[1] Madārij Al-Sālikīn, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/408

Let your tongue be moist with the remembrance of Allāh.[1]

He also said,

عَلَيْكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ لِلَّهِ

Make frequent prostration before Allāh.[2]

In another narration he said,

فَأَعِنِّي عَلَى نَفْسِكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ

Then help me to achieve this for you by devoting yourself often to prostration.[3]

Prostrate abundantly and a great deal. Allāh ﷻ said,

كَانُواْ قَلِيلٗا مِّنَ ٱلَّيۡلِ مَا يَهۡجَعُونَ﴿ ١٧ ﴾ ٱلذَّارِيَات:

They used to sleep only little in the night, (aḏ-Ḏāriyāt:17)

They only slept a little bit at night because they were performing *'Ibādāt*. Train yourself to follow an *'Ibādah* with another and be careful not to overdo it to the point where it becomes boring, or the opposite. Meaning, don't let it be deficient in a way that it'll render it unacceptable.

خُذُوا مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ، فَإِنَّ اللهَ تعالى لَا يَمَلُّ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا

Do the deeds that are easy and comfortable for you. Allāh ﷻ will not get tired of giving you reward until you get bored of performing the deeds.[4]

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[1] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3375

[2] Sahih Muslim 488

[3] Ibid. 489

[4] Sahih Al-Bukhari 5861

It's better to stick to what's little of *'Ibādah* and remain consistent than to do a lot and get sick of it. The soul requires training and gradual development in order to ascend the ladder to perfection, and the mind needs training and gradual improvement to rise on the path to perfection in *'Ibādah*. At the same time, the soul needs relaxation, the soul needs resting. So engaging in *Farā'id*, in obligatory acts, without performing the *Nawāfil*, it's not a sin to do that, however, a person who does that has certainly missed out on a lot.

Obligatory acts are the best *'Ibādāt*. A person who sincerely performs their *Farā'id* and in accordance — the ones who do the *Farā'id* alone — they're better than one who mindlessly does a lot of *Nawāfil*. One who does *Farā'id* sincerely is better than one who does a lot of *Nawāfil* mindlessly. A person who does the *Farā'id* alone is going to *Jannah In shā'* Allāh. A Bedouin with unkempt hair went to the Messenger ﷺ, as in Sahīh Al-Bukhari[1]. He told the Messenger ﷺ, "Teach me about the *Farā'id* of *Islām*." He taught him about what's *Fard* in *Salāh*, what's *Fard* in *Siyām*, what's *Fard* in *Zakāh*, and he informed them about the rules of *Islām*. Then the Bedouin said, and this is our point here,

وَالَّذِي أَكْرَمَكَ لَا أَتَطَوَّعُ شَيْئًا، وَلَا أُنْقِصُ شَيْئًا مِمَّا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ

By the One Who honoured you, I'm not going to perform any Nawāfil, but I'm not going to decrease what Allāh ﷻ has made obligatory on me.

Meaning, I'm only doing the *Farā'id*, I'm not doing any more than that. The Messenger ﷺ didn't say, "You're going to *Jahannam*." *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. The Messenger ﷺ said,

أَفْلَحَ إِنْ صَدَقَ، أَوْ: دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِنْ صَدَقَ

If he's saying the truth, he's succeeded or he's going to Jannah if he's truthful.

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 1891

Completing the *Farā'id* (the obligatory acts) brings that person to success which leads to *Jannah*.

Someone who performs the *Nawāfil* is more successful. He achieves a higher rank and attains nearness to Allāh ﷻ. The category who do the *Farā'id* alone are referred to as *Al-Muhibbūn*, they love Allāh ﷻ. The category who add on the *Nawāfil*, leave matters of doubt, and leave what's *Makrūh*, those are referred to as *Al-Mahbūbūn*, the ones who are loved by Allāh ﷻ. They're the *Awliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ, they're the chosen ones and they're the best of the creation.

There's a big difference between *Al-Mahbūbūn* and *Al-Muhibbūn*, the ones who love Allāh ﷻ and the ones who are loved by Allāh ﷻ, and that's what Ibn Al-Qayyim was saying on this specific matter pertaining to this aspect that we're talking about. He was saying doing the *Nawāfil* with the *Farā'id* elevates you from being a person who's a *Muhibb*, loving Allāh ﷻ, to a *Mahbūb* who's loved by Allāh ﷻ. The ones who do the *Farā'id* alone follow the middle course, *Muqtasid*. Allāh said, ﷻ

...وَمِنْهُم مُّقْتَصِدٌ...﴿ فَاطِر: ٣٢﴾

...Some follow a middle course... (Fāṭir:32)

The category who add on the *Nawāfil* are the foremost in good deeds,

...وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌۢ بِٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ...﴿ فَاطِر: ٣٢﴾

...And some are foremost in good deeds... (Fāṭir:32)

The category who do the *Farā'id* alone are

وَأَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْيَمِينِ مَآ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْيَمِينِ﴿ ٱلْوَاقِعَة: ٢٧﴾

The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right? (al-Wāqiʿah:27)

The ones who add on the *Nawāfil* are the foremost forerunners.

وَٱلسَّـٰبِقُونَ ٱلسَّـٰبِقُونَ﴿ ٱلْوَاقِعَة: ١٠﴾

And the forerunners, the forerunners (al-Wāqiʿah:10)

The ones who add on the *Nawāfil* are *Al-Muqarrabūn*, the nearest to Allāh ﷻ,

فَأَمَّآ إِن كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُقَرَّبِينَ﴿ ٱلْوَاقِعَة: ٨٨﴾

And if he (i.e., the deceased) was of those brought near (to Allāh), (al-Wāqiʿah:88)

فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّتُ نَعِيمٍ﴿ ٱلْوَاقِعَة: ٨٩﴾

Then (for him is) rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. (al-Wāqiʿah:89)

In another verse,

أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلْمُقَرَّبُونَ﴿ ٱلْوَاقِعَة: ١١﴾

Those are the ones brought near (to Allāh), (al-Wāqiʿah:11)

فِى جَنَّـٰتِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ﴿ ٱلْوَاقِعَة: ١٢﴾

In the Gardens of Pleasure. (al-Wāqiʿah:12)

Ibn Hajar[1] has a beautiful statement on how *Farā'id* relate to *Nawāfil* in attaining nearness to Allāh ﷻ. He said it's customary for individuals to seek closeness through means other than what's obligatory upon them. If you owe someone a debt and you pay it back, you're not really seeking

[1] Fatḥ al-Bārī li Ibn Ḥajar, T. al-Salafiyyah, 11/343

closeness to him. You're giving back what you have to give back, you're giving back what you owe. Now, if you present someone with a gift that you're not obligated to give, now you're on your journey towards developing a closer relationship with them. The *Farā'id* act like a debt you owe. The *Nawāfil* act like a gift you give. You attain closeness to Allāh ﷻ through the *Nawāfil* after the *Farā'id*.

Now someone asks, "What *Nawāfil* do I perform?" The response is, there are so many *Nawāfil* that resemble an endless ocean with no shoreline. There are certain matters that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did. He consistently practiced them, but they were not obligatory. For example, he always performed the Sunan for the *Salawāt*. If he wasn't traveling, he always performed the Sunan of the *Salawāt*. In fact, if he missed out on one, he would make it up. He never skipped *Witr* or the *Sunnah* of *Salāt Al-Fajr* even when he was traveling. He consistently fasted Mondays and Thursdays, three days of every month, and *'Āshurā* and the Day of *'Arafah* and the six days of *Shawwāl*.

There are *Nawāfil* that can help someone gain and attain the Love of Allāh ﷻ even though the Messenger ﷺ didn't consistently practice them. *Salāt Ad-Duhā* is an example, even though it's disputed among the *Ulamā'* whether the Messenger ﷺ consistently did *Salāt Ad-Duhā* or not. Ibn Al-Jawzi adopted the opinion that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did *Salāt Ad-Duhā*. Ibn Al-Qayyim in Zād Al-Ma'ād strongly argued against that. He stated that there's no evidence that the Messenger ﷺ regularly did *Salāt Ad-Duhā*. Some believe that the Messenger ﷺ only performed *Salāt Ad-Duhā* when there was a specific reason, like in the conquest of Makkah, or when he was returning from a journey.

Now regardless of whether the Messenger ﷺ did it regularly or not, it's an established *'Ibādah* and it's among the *'Ibādāt* that fall under that which will attain you the Love of Allāh ﷻ *In shā'* Allāh. There are also *'Ibādāt* that don't fit in either of those two categories. The ones that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did and the ones that the Messenger ﷺ did sometimes. There are some *'Ibādāt* where there's general or specific

approval to do them, even though the Messenger ﷺ may not have actually performed them, and a good example of that would be the two *Rak'āt* before *Salāt Al-Maghrib*, the ones between the *Adhān* and *Iqāmah* of *Salāt Al- Maghrib*. Ibn Al-Qayyim mentioned that there's no proof that the Messenger ﷺ performed them. However, there is evidence that the Messenger ﷺ approved of them and that he saw others praying them but he neither commanded nor discouraged them from doing so.

Now fasting is another example. Optional fasting can be observed on any day, so long as it's not a *Makrūh* or prohibited day. There are general *Ahādīth* that encourage fasting. For example, someone sees tomorrow is Tuesday. They want to fast on Tuesday. There is no specific *Hadīth* that says fasting on Tuesdays is recommended. It's not like the first category, where there are *Ahādīth* on fasting Mondays and Thursdays and that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did them, but there are general *Ahādīth* that encourage fasting. They encourage fasting as much as one wishes, with the exception of days that are prohibited. So while Tuesday is not specifically recommended, fasting on that day is still among the *Nawāfil* and deeds that attain you Allāh ﷻ's Love based on the broader *Ahādīth* encouraging fasting. *Ahādīth* like,

مَنْ صَامَ يَوْمًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، بَاعَدَ اللهِ ﷻ وَجْهَهُ عَنِ النَّارِ، سَبْعِيْنَ خَرِيفًا

Whoever fasts one day in the cause of Allāh, Allāh, the Mighty and Sublime, will separate his face from the fire by (a distance of) seventy autumns.[1]

And the other *Hadīth*,

إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ بَابًا يُقَالُ لَهُ :الرَّيَّانُ، يَدْخُلُ مِنْهُ الصَّائِمُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

[1] Sahih Muslim 1153

There is a gate in Paradise called Ar-Rayyān, and those who observe fasts will enter through it on the Day of Resurrection.[1]

It's from the Rahmah and *Ni'mah* of Allāh ﷻ that He granted us a variety of *'Ibādāt* that attain us His love. Ibn Taymiyyah authored a treatise on the diversity of the *'Ibādāt* and the *Fiqh* of dealing with them. When you say "*Allāhu Akbar*" and you want to recite *Du'ā Al-Istiftāh*, there are several. People have different abilities and inclinations. Allāh ﷻ granted them a variety of *'Ibādāt* to make it easier to find a way to worship Allāh ﷻ according to one's strengths, weaknesses, and desires.

One can transition from one form of *'Ibādah* to another depending on his situation and status. Someone who's in a car and he wants to do an *'Ibādah*, he can do *Tasbīh*. Someone who's in his bedroom at night time, He can do *Qiyām*, he can recite *Qur'ān*, and he can do *Tasbīh*. *'Ibādāt* come in many forms, each with its own purpose and benefit. If someone's unable to perform an *'Ibādah* due to an illness, because he's traveling, because of poverty, or weakness, he can still earn rewards through an alternative *'Ibādah*. Among the reasons for the various *'Ibādāt* is to take care of people's circumstances, to relieve their burdens, and to make things easier for them.

Islām takes into account the situations of all people. For example, a poor person may feel that a wealthy person has an advantage over him because they can give in charity and he can't. The rich can give in charity, but the poor ones can't give in charity. In fact, the poor complain to the Messenger ﷺ about this problem. They said, "O Messenger of Allāh! The rich are getting all the reward because they are able to give in charity."[2] The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ taught them a different *'Ibādah* where they can attain the same reward. He said *Subḥān Allāh* is a charity, say *Subḥān Allāh* — it's like you giving a charity. Say *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, it's like

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 1896

[2] Sahih Muslim 595

giving a charity. He told them ordaining the good is a charity, forbidding the evil is a charity, and even being intimate with your spouse is a charity.

There are various acts of *'Ibādah* that grant you different benefits. Some *'Ibādāt* can lead to the forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ, some attain *Jannah*, and some are protection from *Jahannam*. Variety in acts of *'Ibādah* also combats boredom, they energize the spirit, and they allow one to feel the joy and pleasure of the *'Ibādah*. There are also *'Ibādāt* that you do individually and there are *'Ibādāt* you do in congregation. Individual acts of *'Ibādah* that you do alone have great wisdom behind them. They strengthen your connection with Allāh ﷻ, they foster sincerity, they enhance the purity of the soul.

We mentioned the quote of Al- Hasan Al-Basri earlier, where he said that those who spend time alone at night with Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will grant their faces *Nūr* and brightness from Him. *Qiyām* with humility and fear is one of the most beautiful forms of individual *'Ibādāt*. Secret charity is a significant individual *'Ibādah*. But then you have *'Ibādāt* that you do in congregation like *Salāh* in *Jamā'ah*, *Hajj*, *'Umrah*, and other various *'Ibādāt*. They have their benefits and purposes as well. *'Ibādāt* done collectively promote love and unity among Muslims, they educate the ignorant, they promote equality among Muslims, regardless of their color and background and social status, and there are more benefits as well. The diversity in the various *Nawāfil* encourages a Muslim to immerse themselves in the gardens of *'Ibādah*. It's similar to what I mentioned about *Adhkār*. You're in a beautiful garden, all the flowers in that garden are beautiful. You select the flowers that you love most, that you're most comfortable with.

The summary of this talk is to try to do as many *Nawāfil* (non-obligatory *'Ibādāt*) as you can — after the *Farā'id* of course, with the *Farā'id* — and Allāh ﷻ will love you. When Allāh ﷻ loves you, He will place love for Him in your heart and He will help and guide you to perform additional acts of *'Ibādah* to bring you closer to Him.

Dhikr of Allāh

The subject of *Adhkār* is extensive, and profound, and could easily span this entire series, but we can mention a few simple, quick, reminders on the topic. Allāh ﷻ said,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤١﴾ ٱلْأَحْزَاب:

O you who have believed, remember Allāh with much remembrance, (al-ʾAḥzāb:41)

وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ ٱلْأَحْزَاب:

And exalt Him morning and afternoon. (al-ʾAḥzāb:42)

Allāh ﷻ commands the believers to remember him often with much, unseasoned remembrance, and that verse applies to all the *Adhkār*. *Dhikran kathīran*, it includes everything, *Allāhu Akbar*, *Subḥān Allāh*, *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, and the many other forms of *Adhkār* that bring one closer to Allāh ﷻ. Some referred to the *Adhkār* as the sweetest thing in this *Dunyā*, some called it the *Jannah* of this *Dunyā*.

The basic, minimum one should begin with and the least of it — this is for the starters − is the morning and evening *Adhkār*, the prescribed *Adhkār* after the *Salawāt*, the *Adhkār* when one faces an emergency or a hardship, and the *Adhkār* that are mentioned for special occasions and settings, for example like entering or exiting the house or when entering and exiting the bathroom.

One should have a daily setting to sit in solitude with Allāh ﷻ, and one should cherish that time spent alone with Allāh ﷻ while reciting the *Adhkār* and while being mindful that he's uttering with his mouth that which was spoken by the blessed, pure mouth of the Messenger ﷺ. While one is reciting the *Adhkār*, one's heart should be present so much that he

should feel the angels ascending with his reward and the scrolls to Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of the Mighty Throne. The moments you spend in *Adhkār* are blessed moments that will fill your *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah* with brightness and they will keep you connected and attached to Allāh ﷻ.

Your morning and evening *Adhkār* in particular are a shadow of tranquillity and peace for the heart for the entire day. You go through a lot in life, as we all do. The *Adhkār* renew what has been destroyed within yourself. They're means of refreshing the heart and soul and they gather the scattered strands of your tired soul if they're habitually recited. One of the morning and evening *Adhkār* for example is

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّومُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيثُ، أَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

O Ever-Living One, O Eternal One! By Your Mercy, I call on You to set right all my affairs. Do not place me in charge of my soul even for the blinking of an eye (i.e. a moment).[1]

With that *Dhikr* right there, one of the many that one should recite every morning and evening, you're entrusting Allāh ﷻ with every millisecond and with every detail of your affairs. You're saying, "Yā Allāh, set right my affairs." You're saying, "Yā Allāh I have no power, no might, and no strength and I need you every moment of my life." You're saying, "Yā Allāh, don't leave me to myself, not even for the blinking of an eye." You should consider the mornings and evenings that pass without *Adhkār* like a lost day, that they're days lacking in blessings.

The *Adhkār* are very simple and easy, and Allāh ﷻ is near, as He ﷻ stated, yet many are disconnected from them. There's such a huge variety of *Adhkār*. There are *Adhkār* for the various occurrences and situations that occur in life. You can't escape a setting or circumstance that has *Adhkār* attached to it except that another one comes your way. You're

[1] Al-Mustadrak ʿalā Al-Ṣaḥīḥayn li Al-Ḥākim, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/730

leaving your house, there's *Adhkār* for that, you're entering, there's *Adhkār* for that. Who doesn't leave and enter their houses? When entering and leaving the lavatory, there's *Adhkār* for that. Who doesn't leave and enter the lavatory? But how many mention the *Adhkār* prescribed for that? Morning and evenings have their *Adhkār*, they have their unique, prescribed *Adhkār*, and every living being experiences those times of the day. How many mention those morning and evening *Adhkār*? It takes minutes to recite the *Adhkār*, and all it requires is the movement of the lips. One can recite the *Adhkār* while he's waiting to heat his car or while he's waiting for his wife, children, and family to come in the car or while walking out of his door. Very simple, very convenient, and very beneficial to one's *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*, yet it's not common for people to consistently recite them. They keep your connection with Allāh ﷻ, yet not many recite them, even though every person has the ability to recite them.

Ask in gatherings that you're in, say, "How many people recited the morning *Adhkār* today?" Ask how many said *Astaghfiru Allāha al-'Aẓīm* one hundred times today. Most tongues are dry from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, yet they're moist with backbiting or foul speech *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. The gates are open to every single individual to do these simple *Adhkār* that take minutes out of your time, yet there are those who are truly deprived. *Dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ is a *Ni'mah* from Allāh ﷻ, and it's *Tawfīq* from Allāh, that's why not many are attached to them. One needs to seek Allāh ﷻ's *Tawfīq* to enable him to recite the *Adhkār* regularly and persistently.

If you're already doing the *Adhkār*, express gratitude to Allāh ﷻ and thank Him in order to maintain that blessing and so He can increase it for you, just as you would that Allāh ﷻ for any materialistic, worldly *Ni'mah*. *Adhkār* are a *Ni'mah* to thank Allāh ﷻ for. It's truly a blessing that can only come by the *Tawfīq* of Allāh ﷻ.

Morning and evening *Adhkār* are like a therapeutic session that you spend with Allāh ﷻ. There are moments that hit one in life that no human can withstand except by relying on Allāh ﷻ.

There are occasions that can be challenging, and the most effective way to endure them is by strengthening your bond with Allāh ﷻ, and among the best means for it is through *Dhikr*. You express yourself to the One Who owns everything. You recite the *Adhkār* hoping for mercy from Allāh ﷻ. You're asking for all types of goodness. You're asking for forgiveness, protection, security, safety, support, and everything else good. In fact, the formal morning and evening *Adhkār* are a treasure that encompass asking Allāh ﷻ for everything good and seeking refuge for everything bad. They leave nothing out. Those *Adhkār* are like a heavenly fence, a shield of protection, or a blessing that surrounds you throughout your day. They're a protection from the stumbling blocks of evil and the fates of misfortune and bad endings. Those who express themselves to Allāh ﷻ, the Most Generous, they'll only benefit and gain.

Those who become addicted to the morning and evening *Adhkār* will find brightness and joy in their hearts, and it will lead them to increase their *Adhkār* and *'Ibādah* throughout the day, and that's why I said this is just the starting. In Sunan At-Tirmidhi, the Messenger ﷺ mentioned in a *Hadīth*,

وَآمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْكُرُوْا اللهَ؛ فَإِنَّ مَثَلُ ذَلِكَ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ خَرَجَ العَدُوُّ فِيْ أَثَرِهِ سِرَاعًا حَتَّىْ أَتَىْ عَلَى حِصْنٍ حَصِيْنٍ فَأَحْرَزَ نَفْسَهُ مِنْهُمْ، كَذَلِكَ العَبْدُ لاَ يُحْرِزُ نَفْسَهُ مِنْ الشَّيْطَانِ إِلاَ بِذِكْرِ اللهِ

And He commands you to remember Allāh. For indeed the parable of that, is a man whose enemy quickly tracks him until he reaches an impermeable fortress in which he protects himself from them. This is

how the worshiper is; he does not protect himself from Ash-Shaytān except by the remembrance of Allāh.[1]

If you want an impermeable fortress safe from the *Shaytān*, from the enemies, and from harm, then be persistent in your *Adhkār*. The *Hadīth* mentioned the parable of a man whose enemies quickly chase him, *Sirā'an – Sirā'an* means the enemies are in hot pursuit of that individual. Then he reaches an impermeable fortress and now he's safe, he's protected. The enemy pursuing him can no longer reach him now. The *Hadīth* says and likewise is a servant who protects himself from the *Shaytān* and from evil through the *Adhkār*.

You'd be considered mentally ill if you left the house without your clothes on. You would never leave your essential medicine and go on a trip. What's more important than that is to never leave your house without reciting the morning and evening *Adhkār*. They're the backbone of your day. The heart can be compared to a bird and the *Adhkār* can be likened to the bird seeds. The bird seeds provide the necessary energy for the bird to fly after he consumes them. The heart is similar in that it will not soar in worship, nor taste the sweetness of *Īmān*, nor will it have peace of mind without the proper dosage of *Adhkār*. A heart with no *Adhkār* is like a bird with no seeds.

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَتَطۡمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِۗ أَلَا بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطۡمَئِنُّ ٱلۡقُلُوبُ﴿ ٱلرَّعۡد: ٢٨﴾

Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allāh. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allāh hearts are assured. (ar-Raʿd:28)

The greater the amount of *Adhkār*, the greater the heart elevates in everything — in tranquillity, in *Īmān*, in feeling the protection of Allāh

[1] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2863

ﷻ, in having peace of mind, in having *Tawakkul*, in accepting hardships, in accepting the *Qadā'* and *Qadr* of Allāh ﷻ, and more. All that is strengthened through your connection with Allāh ﷻ when you recite the *Adhkār*. Lighter objects in this *Dunyā* tend to soar higher, but with the heart, it's the opposite. The heavier the heart is with *Adhkār*, the higher it will soar. If you find solace and happiness in the cherished moments when you do your *Adhkār*, then be certain that it is indeed a great indication that Allāh ﷻ loves you and that you love Allāh ﷻ.

My father, may Allāh ﷻ grant him a long life full of deeds, loves plants and he has a lot of them, and I try my best to water them every day. If it happens that I miss a day, with some of the plants, their leaves begin to droop. The heart is much like a plant. It requires regular watering to thrive. Neglecting to water the plant will result in it withering and it will eventually perish. Your heart is the same. Water your heart with the *Adhkār*. Establish a consistent, daily routine of *Adhkār*, and you will find yourself naturally inclined to increasing it over time. In Sunan Ibn Mājah in the *Hadīth Al-Qudsi*,

أَنَا مَعَ عَبْدِي إِذَا هُوَ ذَكَرَنِي وَتَحَرَّكَتْ بِي شَفَتَاهُ

I'm with my slave when he remembers Me and his lips move with My mention.[1]

If you want Allāh ﷻ to be with you, remember Him with *Adhkār*, it's as simple as that. And if you have Allāh ﷻ with you, what else do you need? When you fill your time with *Adhkār*, it means Allāh ﷻ is with you. When He's with you, it means He will suffice you from everything — from calamities, fatigue, enemies, fear, and frustration of the future. You will find from Allāh's sufficiency that which will make you feel happy and content in life. In Sunan Ibn Mājah, the Messenger ﷺ said,

[1] Sunan Ibn Majah 3792

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِأُمَّتِي فِي بُكُورِهَا

O Allāh, bless my Ummah in their early mornings.

Mornings are blessings for the believers. The translation of the *Hadīth* is a *Du'ā* of the Messenger ﷺ. He said, "O Allāh bless for my *Ummah* their early mornings."[1] Mornings are blessings for the believers. Add to that blessing, add to that *Barakah,* the *Barakah* of the *Adhkār*. *Barakah* means *Barakah* in everything in your life. It means *Barakah* in your *'Ibādah*, in your business, in your work, in your children, and in everything else. Happiness will descend into the heart so it will become cheerful with *Adhkār*. It will become peaceful and it will have certainty in Allāh ﷻ.

When reflecting on the *Adhkār*, you'll notice there are the morning and evening *Adhkār*, there are *Adhkār* for entering and exiting the house, there are *Adhkār* for when you sleep and when you wake up, and many other daily *Adhkār*. When one reflects on them, one realizes one of the wisdoms behind them is that it has a great impact on keeping one connected and attached to Allāh ﷻ. They help in avoiding being heedless with Allāh ﷻ.

Ibn Al- Jawzi said the heart is a fortress.[2] Ibn Al-Qayyim in Al-Wābil As-Sayyib said something very similar, but Ibn Al-Jawzi said the heart is a fortress and the *Shaytān* continues to roam around that fortress. He's roaming around seeking to catch you off guard. How does he catch you off guard? By being mindless of Allāh ﷻ and His remembrance. He said the guard must not slack off from guarding not even for a moment, just like the enemy never slacks off. How does the guard slack off? By being mindless of Allāh ﷻ, by being mindless of the remembrance, of the *Dhikr*

[1] Sunan Abi Dawud 2606

[2] Talbīs Iblīs, Ṭ. Dār Al-Fikr, 1/36

of Allāh ﷻ. Those who are feeling burdened by the challenges of life and seek solace in Allāh through the morning and evening *Adhkār* will, without a doubt, find comfort, relief, and a path of ease from their difficulties and troubles — without a doubt.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ فَٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ قِيَـٰمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ...﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ١٠٣﴾

And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allāh standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. (an-Nisāʾ:103)

While you're standing, while you're, and sitting while you're lying down. Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said, "Remember your Lord in both the night and the day, in the land and in the sea, in traveling and at home, in times of wealth and in times of poverty, in health and in illness, in public and in private."[1] Remember Allāh ﷻ often and don't have the characteristic of the hypocrites, who Allāh ﷻ condemned as only remembering Allāh ﷻ a little.

...ٱلنَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ ٱللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ١٤٢﴾

...And they do not remember Allāh but little. (an-Nisāʾ:103)

[1] Tafsīr Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭ. Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafá Al-Bāz, 4/1056

Continuous Dhikr of Allāh

The next aspect to cultivating love for Allāh ﷻ that was highlighted by Ibn Al-Qayyim[1] is the continuous remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. The *Adhkār*, *Dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ, in all circumstances, through one's tongue, through his heart, through his actions, and in all states. For the *Adhkār* to be effective they need to be a regular, constant part of one's life. When Allāh ﷻ encourages us to recite the *Adhkār* in many verses throughout the *Qur'ān*, He emphasizes along with it the importance of remembering Him *Kathīran*, which means much and often.

...وَٱلذَّٰكِرِينَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا...﴿ ٱلْأَحْزَاب: ٣٥﴾

And the men who remember Allāh often… (al-ʾAḥzāb:35)

...وَٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا...﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال: ٤٥﴾

And remember Allāh often… (al-ʾAnfāl:45)

...وَٱذْكُر رَّبَّكَ كَثِيرًا...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٤١﴾

And remember your Lord much… (ʾĀli ʿImrān:41)

Ibn Al-Qayyim mentioned the *Dhikr* of the tongue and the heart and the actions. The *Dhikr* of the tongue is known; it involves the recitation of the *Qur'ān* and the various other forms of *Adhkār* that bring one closer to Allāh ﷻ. The *Dhikr* of the heart is not forgetting Allāh ﷻ; it's ensuring that the heart remains attentive and not heedless during the performance of both the verbal *Adhkār* as well as the physical *'Ibādāt*. The *Dhikr* of the action that Ibn Al-Qayyim mentioned, that encompasses the *'Ibādāt*

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/18

of the limbs that bring one closer to Allāh ﷻ, like *Dhikr* — because that involves the tongue — like *Salāh*, *Siyām*, *Hajj*, *Zakāh*, *Jihād*. In the previous *Khawātir*, we mentioned some criteria for assessing your love to Allāh ﷻ. This is an additional one. Your love for Allāh ﷻ is directly related to how much *Dhikr* you do.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "The extent of your love for Allāh ﷻ is proportional and equivalent to the amount of *Dhikr* you do."[1] Your connection to Allāh ﷻ and the love you hold for Him diminishes when you neglect the *Adhkār* in your daily life. *Adhkār* are like the soul of the *'Ibādāt*, they beautify the *'Ibādāt*. That's why they're attached to all the major *'Ibādāt*, like *Salāh*. In the context about *Salāh*, Allāh ﷻ said,

...وَٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴿ ٱلْجُمُعَة: ١٠ ﴾

And remember Allāh often that you may succeed. (al-Jumuʿah:10)

Salawāt have specified *Adhkār* in them and after them and even before them. There are reminders to recite the *Adhkār* after *Hajj* and during *Hajj*,

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُم مَّنَـٰسِكَكُمْ فَٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ ءَابَآءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا...﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة: ٢٠٠ ﴾

And when you have completed your rites, remember Allāh like your (previous) remembrance of your fathers or with (much) greater remembrance. (al-Baqarah:200)

And, of course, there are *Adhkār* right before you start *Hajj*. *Jihād* is attached to *Adhkār*.

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/18

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَٱثْبُتُواْ وَٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال: ٤٥﴾

O you who have believed, when you encounter a company (from the enemy forces), stand firm and remember Allāh much that you may be successful. (al-ʾAnfāl:45)

In fact, other *ʻIbādāt*, like fasting for example, their reward increases significantly when they're accompanied by *Adhkār*. The *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah* benefits of *Adhkār* are vast and enormous. Allāh ﷻ promises to be with you so long as you're doing your *Adhkār*. That, right there by itself, is sufficient for one to do non-stop *Adhkār*. In the *Hadīth Qudsi*,

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي

I am present when my servant thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me.[1]

I'm with my servant when he remembers Me. Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ﷺ said, "Nothing a person does can save him from the punishment of Allāh ﷻ like *Adhkār*."[2] *Mujāhid* commenting on the verse,

...وَٱلذَّٰكِرِينَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَٱلذَّٰكِرَٰتِ أَعَدَّ ٱللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴿ ٱلْأَحْزَاب: ٣٥﴾

...And the men who remember Allāh often and the women who do so - for them Allāh has prepared forgiveness and a great reward. (al-ʾAḥzāb:35)

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 7405

[2] al-Zuhd li-Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, T. Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/151

He said the verse promises the men and the women who remember Allāh ﷻ with much *Dhikr* that they will attain great reward and forgiveness from Allāh ﷻ. Mujāhid said, "You will not attain that promise or that status until you habitually make *Dhikr* standing, sitting, and lying."[1]

ٱلَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ ٱللَّهَ قِيَـٰمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ...
﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ١٩١﴾

Those who remember Allāh while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides… (ʾĀli ʿImrān:191)

That's what Ibn Al-Qayyim meant when he said in all states — standing, sitting, laying, driving, in the house, at the job — your *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah* prosperity and success stems from your continuous recitation of the *Adhkār*.

...وَٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴿ ٱلْجُمُعَة: ١٠﴾

And remember Allāh often that you may succeed. (al-Jumuʿah:10)

Tuflihūn is success. It comes from *Adhkār*, by the Will of Allāh. Those who allow the distractions of this *Dunyā* to prevent them from *Dhikr*, they're regarded as losers. You can't even let your most beloved child or wealth or anything distract you from *Dhikr*.

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَٰلُكُمْ وَلَآ أَوْلَـٰدُكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْخَـٰسِرُونَ
﴿ ٱلْمُنَافِقُون: ٩﴾

[1] Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr fī at-Tafsīr bil-Maʾthūr, Ṭ. Dār Al-Fikr, 6/609

O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allāh. And whoever does that - then those are the losers. (al-Munāfiqūn:9)

Continuously reciting your *Adhkār* means that Allāh ﷻ will mention you.

فَٱذْكُرُونِيٓ أَذْكُرْكُمْ...﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة: ١٥٢﴾

Remember me and I will remember you. (al-Baqarah:152)

...وَلَذِكْرُ ٱللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ...﴿ ٱلْعَنْكَبُوت: ٤٥﴾

...And the remembrance of Allāh is greater... (al-ʿAnkabūt:45)

That means Allāh's mention of you is greater than your mention of Him in return for you mentioning Him. If you mention Allāh ﷻ to yourself, Allāh ﷻ will mention you to Himself. If you mention Allāh ﷻ in an assembly, Allāh ﷻ will make mention of you in an assembly better than yours.

ذَكَرَنِي، فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ، ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي، وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَإٍ، ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَإٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ

If he remembers Me to himself, I remember him to Myself, and if he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering better than that.[1]

Just like true losers are the ones who neglect *Adhkār*, the true winners are the ones who are guided to engage in *Adhkār*. *Sabaqa al-Mufarridūn*, the Messenger ﷺ said, "The *Mufarridūn* have preceded, they've won, they're victorious." The Messenger ﷺ defined it, he said,

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 7405

"They're the males and females who remember Allāh ﷻ much."[1] Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ said, "Allāh does not impose any obligations on his servants without setting a limit for it, and Allāh ﷻ excuses those who have valid reasons for not doing it, except for *Adhkār*."[2] There's no specific limit for *Adhkār*, and Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ said the only category exempted from doing *Adhkār* are those who are mentally insane.

A believer's biggest regret should be missing out on *Adhkār*. Especially when they know how important and beneficial *Adhkār* are, and how easy and simple it is to incorporate *Adhkār* in your daily life. One must continue to strive until uttering *Adhkār* becomes a natural habit for both your heart and your tongue. You overcome mindlessness in this matter by gradually training yourself to keep your tongue moist with the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ at all times. There are so many gaps in our lives where we can comfortably include *Adhkār* in them. It's the simplest thing to do, but not everyone has been granted *Tawfīq* from Allāh ﷻ to do it, and *Wallāhi*, that's something to cry over. A man told the Messenger ﷺ,

إِنَّ شَرَائِعَ الإِسْلَامِ قَدْ كَثُرَتْ عَلَيَّ، فَأَخْبِرْنِي بِشَيْءٍ أَتَشَبَّثُ بِهِ

There are so many 'Ibādāt, so many legislated acts, it's overwhelming. Give me something to stick to.

The Messenger ﷺ said

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

Keep your tongue wet with the remembrance of Allāh.[3]

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[1] Sahih Muslim 2676

[2] Tafsīr Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭ. Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafá Al-Bāz, 9/3138

[3] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3375

In Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abu Dardā' ﷺ said, "Those whose tongues are moist with the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ are the ones who will enter *Jannah* laughing."[1] *Adhkār* are like a mighty gate between you and Allāh ﷻ. You open it by reciting your *Adhkār*, you close it by stopping your *Adhkār*. You're in control of that gate. *Adhkār* represent the true treasure, the true savings, and the capital of a believer, because they're the means that help you gain entry into *Jannah* and they're the means that elevate your status in *Jannah*.

By reciting *Adhkār*, you construct your palace in *Jannah*, and you determine the size of your palace in *Jannah* through *Adhkār*. *Adhkār* polish, remedy, and rejuvenate your heart. They rejuvenate the heart from all the ailments. They're means for Allāh ﷻ to provide you the best of what's in this *Dunyā* and the *Ākhirah*. One whose heart and tongue is in harmony while doing the *Adhkār* will grow in love and longing to meet Allāh ﷻ.

There are various types of *Adhkār*, as we all know. One can never get bored of them. There are booklets, books, and volumes from the past and the present that are written on the types of *Adhkār* and what's authentic and what's not authentic. The various types of *Adhkār* are like someone wandering in a garden. He enjoys all the beautiful plants and flowers that are there. He picks and chooses from those beautiful plants and flowers what he likes.

The best *Dhikr* is the *Qur'ān*, and we spoke on that, we had an independent talk on that and several other ones in the past. You have *Tasbīh* and *Tahmīd* — saying *Subḥān Allāh*, saying *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, *Tahlīl*; saying *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, the best word a human can utter. *Takbīr*; saying *Allāhu Akbar*, and *Istighfār*. In the astonishing *Hadīth* in Sunan Ibn Mājah[2], The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said when one says *Subḥān Allāh* or *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* or *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, those *Adhkār* revolve around

[1] Al-Muṣannaf li Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ṭ. Dār Al-Tāj, 6/58; Ṭ. Dār Kunūz Ishbīliyā, 16/224.

[2] Sunan Ibn Majah 3809

the *'Arsh* of Allāh ﷻ buzzing like bees, reminding of the one said them. The *Hadīth* says — not me, this is the *Hadīth* — and it's an obvious comment on the *Hadīth* — the *Hadīth* says, "Who wouldn't want to have something like that which remind of him in the presence of Allāh ﷻ?"

Another essential form of *Dhikr* is *Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ with *Istighfār – Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ and Hamd, thanking Allāh *(Al-ḥamdu li-llāh)* — with those constantly on your tongue, you're set. Your worries will fade away, your provisions will increase, and Allāh ﷻ will elevate your status in *Dunyā* and in *Ākhirah*. One of the ways that Allāh ﷻ honoured the Messenger ﷺ is by raising him high in fame.

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ﴿ ٱلشَّرْح: ٤﴾

And raised high for you your repute. (aš-Šarḥ:4)

And part of that is by making *Salāh* and Salām on the Messenger ﷺ, a form of *Dhikr* that you attain blessing and reward for. That's a mark of honour for the Messenger ﷺ. Allāh bestowed it on the Messenger ﷺ. *Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ expresses your love for him and it's an order from Allāh ﷻ. Many weep at the mention of the Messenger ﷺ. They need to put that into action, that love needs to be put into action. One way to show your admiration, respect, reverence, and love to RasūlAllāh ﷺ is by frequently sending *Salāh* upon him, ﷺ.

While saying *Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ, you should feel the meanings of what you're saying and the honour that Allāh ﷻ has bestowed upon him. Some *Ulamā'* said if it wasnt revelation from Allāh ﷻ, no one would ever imagine that a human on this earth would attain the high status that the Messenger ﷺ attained.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّۚ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا ﴿ ٱلْأَحْزَاب: ٥٦﴾

Indeed, Allāh *confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels (ask Him to do so). O you who have believed, ask (Allāh to confer) blessing upon him and ask (Allāh to grant him) peace. (al-ʾAḥzāb:35)*

Allāh ﷻ informed the angels about the status of the Messenger ﷺ in the Highest Assembly. The angels themselves sent *Salāh* upon the Messenger ﷺ.

...يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا
﴿ ٱلْأَحْزَاب: ٥٦﴾

O you who have believed, ask (Allāh to confer) blessing upon him and ask (Allāh to grant him) peace. (al-ʾAḥzāb:35)

Allāh ﷻ then instructed the people of the earth to send *Salāh* and Salām upon the Messenger ﷺ so that the praise for the Messenger ﷺ may be unified from both the upper and lower realms. This *Dhikr*, which is *Salāh* upon the Messenger ﷺ, helps cultivate a sense of reverence in the Muslim's heart towards the Messenger ﷺ. The respect then encourages an individual to translate their love into actions, like following the Messenger ﷺ's teachings and striving to imitate him in everything

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣١﴾

Say, (O Muhammad), "If you should love Allāh, then follow me, (so) Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins… (ʾĀli ʿImrān:31)

Salāh on the Messenger ﷺ is the *'Ibādah* that's rewarded in multi folds.

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرَ صَلَوَاتٍ، وَحُطَّتْ عَنْهُ عَشْرُ خَطِيئَاتٍ، وَرُفِعَتْ لَهُ عَشْرُ دَرَجَاتٍ

Whoever sends one prayer (Salāh) upon me, Allāh will send ten prayers upon him, remove ten of his sins, and raise him ten degrees in rank.[1]

Among the rewards for one *Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ is that Allāh ﷻ will grant you ten *Salawāt* in return, ten sins will be remitted, and you will be raised ten degrees. There are many current stories to mention about the effect and benefits and blessings that one attains from *Adhkār* and from *Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ. I'm going to mention one, and by Allāh, someone told me that story today. I had previously told this individual to be consistent in their *Adhkār* and I emphasized *Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ and *Istighfār* and saying *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, and they mentioned to me that they've been doing those specific *Adhkār* thousands of times a day. Today — that's why I mentioned it, there are plenty of stories, but this one I'm going to mention because I was informed of it today — that individual called me and said, "I have something important to share with you." That person took a walk to buy some groceries, and on their way, they saw something in a store window that they really wanted but couldn't buy. For some reason, they couldn't purchase it. They were making *Salāh* on the Messenger ﷺ as they were walking, when they stopped, and when they continued after passing the store. As it frequently happens, they forgot about the item, but later that night, that person's niece or nephew surprised them with exactly what they had seen. It was a gift from that individual's niece or nephew. It was strange because that individual never told anyone about what they wanted − they didn't mention it to anyone — and it's also unusual that that person's niece or nephew would give them a gift, it's unusual for them to gift them, and it ended up in their hands before they went to sleep. The benefits and blessings of *Adhkār* are enormous.

And keep in mind what falls under this topic also, is that the *Adhkār*, the morning and evening *Adhkār*, never miss those. *Wallāhi*, I don't know how someone can step out of their house before doing the morning and

[1] Sunan an-Nasa'i 1297

evening *Adhkār*. That's an entire topic on its own. The morning and evening *Adhkār* are more powerful than the barrier between us and *Ya'jūj* and *Ma'jūj*, especially when one recites them with a focused heart. The morning and evening *Adhkār* are a cloak of protection from the evils of humans and the evils of the *Jinn*. The one who does his *Adhkār* is in the stronghold and fortress of his *Adhkār*. Whenever one becomes distracted, the door to that fortress, that stronghold opens.

And also, don't neglect the *Adhkār* after the *Salawāt* or when waking up and sleeping and when entering and leaving. The more you mention Allāh ﷻ in *Adhkār*, the more Allāh ﷻ loves you because you're expressing your love to Him through the *Adhkār*. If Allāh ﷻ loves you, then the angels will also love you, and if the angels love you, they'll protect you by the Will of Allāh ﷻ and they'll surround you. In Sahīh Muslim,

لَا يَقْعُدُ قَوْمٌ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ ﷻ إِلَّا حَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ...

No group of people sits together remembering Allāh ﷻ except that the angels surround them...[1]

In the longer *Hadīth* also in Sahīh Muslim[2], there are noble squads of angels.

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً سَيَّارَةً

Allāh has mobile (squads) of angels

There are angels whose task is to follow the people who do *Adhkār*. Their task is to sit with them and to surround them with their wings until the space between them and the sky of the world is fully covered. When the angels leave and they go upwards to Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ asks them —

[1] Sahih Muslim 2700a

[2] Ibid. 2689

even though Allāh ﷻ knows — He asks them, "Where have you come from?" And they'll say, "We came from servants on this Earth who were doing their *Adhkār*." They were saying *Subḥān Allāh*, they were saying *Allāhu Akbar*, they were saying *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, and they were begging you. Allāh ﷻ says, "What were they begging me for? What did they want?" The angels say, "They wanted the *Jannah*." At the end of the long *Hadīth*, Allāh ﷻ says "I will grant them *Jannah* and I will grant them protection from *Jahannam*." The angels informed Allāh ﷻ — of course, Allāh ﷻ already knew — that they were making *Dhikr*, and then they made *Du'ā* to which Allāh ﷻ accepted and answered. This means *Du'ā* after *Adhkār* increases the likeliness of the *Du'ā* being accepted.

The summary of this talk is that when someone truly loves another, they'll bring them up all the time. It shows a deep connection and love that fills the heart. If Allāh ﷻ holds a special place in your heart, you'll find yourself mentioning Allāh ﷻ often. The way to express this, when it comes to Allāh ﷻ, is through *Adhkār*. When your love for Allāh ﷻ is profound, He becomes a vital part of your thoughts and feelings. That influences your subconscious, and that naturally results in you mentioning Allāh ﷻ through *Adhkār* regularly. This constant recitation of *Adhkār* reflects how important Allāh ﷻ is in your life. It helps you to stay close to Allāh ﷻ, it's a sincere expression of your love, and it opens the gates of goodness for your *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. I'm going to conclude with that beautiful statement that Ibn Al-Qayyim mentioned, "The level of your love for Allāh ﷻ is equal to how much you remember Him in *Adhkār*."[1]

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/18

Preferring What Allāh Loves

The next factor to attain love for Allāh ﷻ is something Ibn Al- Qayyim mentioned[1]. He said it's preferring what Allāh ﷻ loves over your own love and desires, especially in moments of temptation. When someone is faced with strong desires, they have two choices to make — and of course, we're talking about *Harām* desires. They can either follow what pleases Allāh ﷻ through their actions and words, or they can give in to their own desires and to the temptations of the *Shaytān*.

To genuinely attain love for Allāh ﷻ, which is our topic, a person needs to fight against their desires and practice patience in doing so, because it can be difficult at times. They should focus on following Allāh ﷻ's Commands and they should focus on embracing what Allāh ﷻ loves and choose what Allāh ﷻ loves over their own love and desires. It's a struggle, in fact, it's a form of *Jihād*, but it's a path to attaining love for Allāh ﷻ. A man asked Al-Hasan Al-Basri, "Which form of *Jihād* is the best?" Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "*Jihād* against your own desires."[2] Allāh ﷻ said,

وَجَٰهِدُواْ فِي ٱللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِۦ...﴿ ٱلْحَجّ: ٧٨﴾

Strive hard in Allāh's cause as you ought to strive… (al-Ḥajj:78)

Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak said *Ḥaqqa Jihādihi* in this verse means *Mujāhadat an-Nafs wa al-hawā – Ḥaqqa Jihādihi* in this verse means the fight and struggle against oneself and one's desires[3]. So in order to love

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/18

[2] Rawḍat Al-Muḥibbīn wa Nuzhat Al-Mushtāqīn, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/478; Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/639

[3] Tafsīr Al-Baghawī, Ṭ. Dār Ṭayyibah, 5/402; Ṭ. Dār Iḥyāʾ Al-Turāth Al-ʿArabī, 3/354

Allāh ﷻ, you must love what Allāh ﷻ loves and hate what Allāh ﷻ dislikes. Your desires need to be subservient to what Allāh ﷻ loves. You prioritize what Allāh ﷻ loves over your own desires.

Ramadān is a perfect example of this talk today. You love to eat and drink and married spouses love to have relationships during the day. Believers willingly leave or face the discomfort of hunger and thirst to please Allāh ﷻ. They'll leave the relationship with their spouses during the day to please Allāh ﷻ. They choose what Allāh ﷻ loves and desires over what they love and desire. They not only withstand the pain of being hungry and thirsty, but they'll also reach a deep level of love for Allāh ﷻ that they'll even find joy in that discomfort because it's what Allāh ﷻ loves. Similar to that is waking up for *Fajr*. You wake up from the cozy warmth of your bed to go do *Wudū'* or make *Ghusl*. You're tired or it's chilly outside, but you still wake up. That signifies a profound love for Allāh ﷻ in that person's heart. Leaving the *Harām* that one desires because it's something that Allāh ﷻ despises, that also shows how much they love Allāh ﷻ. In Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[1], the Messenger ﷺ said,

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ؛ وَجَدَ حَلَاوَةَ الإِيمَانِ: أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا

Whoever possesses three qualities, will attain the sweetness of Īmān. One of them, the first one of them, is to love Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger more than anyone else.

And this love isn't just about words that one says or poetry that describes that love, this love entails that you love and submit to their commands and to love what they love and hate what they hate.

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 16

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣١﴾

Say, (O Muhammad), "If you should love Allāh, then follow me, (so) Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. (ʾĀli ʿImrān:31)

Simply put, proof of genuine love is putting what your beloved loves before what you love yourself. If you truly love Allāh ﷻ, you'll put what Allāh ﷻ loves before your own desires and love. Take the example of *Jihād*, the *Mujāhidīn* — the righteous true *Mujāhidīn* who uphold the banner of *Tawhīd* are among the most hated of our time by the *Munāfiqīn* and those who claim to be Muslim, but Allāh ﷻ loves them.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَـٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُم بُنْيَـٰنٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ﴿ ٱلصَّفّ: ٤﴾

Indeed, Allāh *loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a (single) structure joined firmly. (aṣ-Ṣaff:4)*

And Allāh ﷻ praised them, and He praised them in numerous verses, and when He praises them, it means He loves them.

...وَمَن يُقَـٰتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ٧٤﴾

...And he who fights in the cause of Allāh and is killed or achieves victory – We will bestow upon him a great reward. (an-Nisāʾ:74)

And He said,

وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَهَاجَرُواْ وَجَٰهَدُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَاوَواْ وَّنَصَرُوٓاْ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّاۚ لَّهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال: ٧٤﴾

But those who have believed and emigrated and fought in the cause of Allāh *and those who gave shelter and aided - it is they who are the believers, truly. For them is forgiveness and noble provision. (al-ʾAnfāl:74)*

Hating what Allāh ﷻ loves is one of the most evident indicators that one does not possess true love for Allāh ﷻ. Many who claim to be Muslim, like the Murji'ah Jews of the Qiblah, the liberalists, and modernists, they dislike the entire concept of *Jihād*. It's the most hated topic to them. It irks them because of their diseased hearts. You can't claim to love Allāh ﷻ and at the same time dislike *Jihād* and the righteous *Mujāhidīn.* And no, those who fight for the sake of the *Tawāghīt* and be loyal to the enemies of Allāh are not true *Mujāhidīn.*

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱلطَّٰغُوتِ...﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ٧٦﴾

Those who believe fight in the cause of Allāh, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of Tāghūt… (an-Nisāʾ:76)

It's not genuine love for Allāh ﷻ if you harbour animosity and hate to those whom Allāh ﷻ loves. The speedometer tells you how fast you're going. The thermostat tells you how warm your house is. Love for *Jihād* tells you how much you love Allāh ﷻ. Imagine that, one of the most hated obligations is the litmus test for truly loving Allāh ﷻ. Ibn Taymiyyah

considered it the best voluntary *'Ibādah* that one can do and he said it's the true sign of complete love for Allāh ﷻ, because of the verse,

قُلْ إِن كَانَ ءَابَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَٰنُكُمْ وَأَزْوَٰجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَٰلٌ ٱقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَٰرَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَجِهَادٍ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ فَتَرَبَّصُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿ ٱلتَّوْبَة: ٢٤﴾

Say, (O Muhammad), "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and Jihād (i.e., striving) in His cause, then wait until Allāh executes His command. And Allāh does not guide the defiantly disobedient people."[1] *(at-Tawbah:24)*

Your love for Allāh ﷻ is fake if you hate *Jihād* or if you're harsh against the righteous *Muwahiddīn* and *Mujāhidīn* and believers and lenient and humble to the *Kuffār* and enemies of *Islām*. The characteristic of those who love Allāh and those who are loved by Allāh in the verse *Yuḥibbuhum wa Yuḥibbūnahu* — the characteristic in that verse about them is being humble towards the believers and harsh and stern against the disbelievers.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِى ٱللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُۥٓ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ يُجَٰهِدُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ...﴿ ٱلْمَائِدَة: ٥٤﴾

[1] Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā, T. Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 10/57

O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion – Allāh will bring forth (in place of them) a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, strong against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allāh… (al-Māʾidah:54)

Jihād is a fundamental criterion for demonstrating one's love for Allāh ﷻ, because it's the exertion of one's utmost ability to attain what is beloved by Allāh ﷻ and it's exerting one's utmost ability in repelling what is disliked by Allāh ﷻ.

When a person loves something, even *Dunyā* matters, they're willing to make sacrifices for what they love. They'll sacrifice for a job or a position that they love. They'll sacrifice for the wealth they want to gain that they love, they'll sacrifice for a beloved spouse, they'll sacrifice for other *Dunyā* matters that they truly love, and they'll sacrifice even if it leads to personal loss and harm. Allāh ﷻ said,

...وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَشَدُّ حُبّٗا لِّلَّهِ...﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة: ١٦٥﴾

...But those who believe are stronger in love for Allāh… (al-Baqarah:165)

Those who believe love Allāh more than what they love. They're willing to sacrifice for *Dunyā* matters that they love, even at the risk of harming themselves.

وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَشَدُّ حُبّٗا لِّلَّهِ

Those who love Allāh more will sacrifice for what Allāh ﷻ loves no matter what harm they face. Just like you must love what Allāh ﷻ loves, you can't claim to love Allāh ﷻ and not dislike what He dislikes. It's not true love of Allāh ﷻ to like what Allāh ﷻ dislikes. Allāh, for example, hates the *Kuffār*.

...لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٢﴾

He truly does not like the disbelievers. (ʾĀli ʿImrān:32)

...لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ﴿ ٱلرُّوم: ٤٥﴾

He truly does not like the disbelievers. (ar-Rūm:45)

It is twice in the *Qur'ān* in that wording. So Allāh ﷻ does not like the *Kuffār*. To deceive oneself into believing otherwise or to express or have love for them is one of the most evident indicators of a lack of genuine love for Allāh ﷻ. So to love Allāh ﷻ, you prioritize the Desires of Allāh ﷻ over your own desires and the desires of others, even in the face of significant trials or heavy burdens. Preferring what Allāh ﷻ loves and desires can be attained — obviously — by overcoming the desires within you, the desires of your *Nafs*. You can't develop strong love for Allāh ﷻ until you overcome the forbidden desires.

In Rawdat Al-Muhibbīn, Ibn Al-Qayyim said, "I heard my Shaykh, Ibn Taymiyyah say that *Jihād* against one's desires and his inner-self is the foundation for *Jihād* against the *Kuffār* and the *Munāfiqīn*."[1] A person can't effectively confront his enemy until he first overcomes his own desires.

Those who conquer their desires gain strength and honour, and those who let their desires control them face humiliation and failure. And just like overcoming the desires of the *Nafs* is essential, it's essential to attain love for Allāh ﷻ, one must also overcome the *Shaytān* and his *Awliyā'* to love Allāh ﷻ. Love of Allāh ﷻ and following the *Shaytān* or what desires are two opposing forces that can't coexist. If a person doesn't resist the *Shaytān* when he tries to invade his heart, how can he expect to maintain

[1] Rawḍat Al-Muḥibbīn wa Nuzhat Al-Mushtāqīn, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/478; Ṭ. ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/639-640

love for Allāh ﷻ? The *Shaytān* continues to repel what Allāh ﷻ loves out of the heart, one matter after another, by luring one with his tactics and by striking him with his schemes. If the *Shaytān* is not actively resisted, the heart will eventually become devoid of love for Allāh ﷻ, *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. Allāh ﷻ said,

إِنَّ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَٱتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا ۚ إِنَّمَا يَدْعُواْ حِزْبَهُۥ لِيَكُونُواْ مِنْ أَصْحَـٰبِ ٱلسَّعِيرِ ﴿ فَاطِر: ٦﴾

Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze. (Fāṭir:6)

Allāh ﷻ said,

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِۦ وَنَهَى ٱلنَّفْسَ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ ﴿ ٱلنَّازِعَات: ٤٠﴾

But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination, (an-Nāziʿāt:40)

فَإِنَّ ٱلْجَنَّةَ هِىَ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿ ٱلنَّازِعَات: ٤١﴾

Then indeed, Paradise will be (his] refuge. (an-Nāziʿāt:41)

وَنَهَى ٱلنَّفْسَ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ

If one restrains himself from following His forbidden desires in favour of what Allāh ﷻ loves, he gets a special reward.

فَإِنَّ ٱلْجَنَّةَ هِىَ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰ

– *Jannah will be their abode.* Keep in mind, if the *Nafs* experiences a desire or there's a *Shaytān*ic whisper, but the believer refrains from acting

on them and resists them for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, that restraint itself becomes an act of *'Ibādah*, a righteous deed that he gets reward for, and it's a sign that person loves Allāh ﷻ.

And there are tens upon tens of practical ways to help one overcome their desires, the desires that conflict with what Allāh ﷻ loves. In the last chapter of the famous book that I mentioned several times, Rawdat Al-Muhibbīn by Ibn Al-Qayyim, he dedicated the last chapter of that book to this chapter we're talking about. He called that chapter Dhamm Al-Hawā', and in that chapter he mentioned fifty ways to overcome and resist desires.

When I read that book many years ago, I noticed similarities between some of the means Ibn Al-Qayyim chose to some of the ones that Ibn Al-Jawzi chose. It appears that Ibn Al-Qayyim benefitted from Ibn Al-Jawzi's means on this matter, he benefitted from Ibn Al- Jawzi's points on this. Ibn Al-Jawzi has an entire book on this topic, and it's by the same name that Ibn Al-Qayyim chose for the last chapter of his book, Dhamm Al- Hawā'. The entire book of Ibn Al-Jawzi is called Dhamm Al-Hawā'.

The reason why I say that Ibn Al-Qayyim is the one who benefited is because some of the fifty that he mentioned are very similar to some of the seven that Ibn Al-Jawzi mentioned, and Abu Al-Faraj Ibn Al-Jawzi died close to a century, precisely ninety-four years before Ibn Al-Qayyim was even born. Some actually think they're the same person, but they're not.

What matters though is that they both mentioned ways to overcome desires that counter what Allāh ﷻ loves. It's a lengthy subject, and it could be explored in a separate series of discussions, but one should know that among the ways to overcome desires is to know and remember that following desires goes against the concept of *Tawhīd*. Following desires and *Tawhīd* are completely opposite concepts. Desires can be seen as idols. *Tawhīd* is against idols. Desires can be seen as idols because one follows them and obeys them. The desires are an idol in the heart of everyone. And Allāh ﷻ sent His Messenger ﷺ to break the physical idols

and to break the idols in each person's heart as well. Allāh ﷻ said some people chose to follow their own desires, taking them as a Lord instead of taking Allāh ﷻ as their Lord.

أَفَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ ٱتَّخَذَ إِلَـٰهَهُۥ هَوَىٰهُ...﴿ ٱلْجَاثِيَة: ٢٣﴾

Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire?
(al-Jāthiyah:23)

So following one's desires goes against the concept of *Tawhīd* and a person who's driven by desires is blinded by those desires. Once they get addicted to following their desires, they don't realize what they're getting into. Someone drenched in his *Harām* desires is similar, in a way, to a person who's cooking in the kitchen. The person in the kitchen might not notice the smell of the food until they go outside for a bit of fresh air. When they come back after getting some fresh air, they'll realize how strong the aroma around them is or was.

A person drenched in following his desires doesn't realize what he's gotten himself into, so he needs a breath of fresh air. That fresh air for someone following his desires is to step aside and think about following his desires — to think about it.

A wise person thinks and analyses his desires and he thinks about their implications before he actually commits them. If they do think about it, and he's wise, they'll realize it's not worth it. They'll think about how much harm their desires will cause them for that short, temporary pleasure that fades away within moments. The harm is many folds worse than the pleasure of the desire and it'll cause a wise person to walk away and turn away. Virtues are lost when one fulfils his *Harām* desires. They cause disgrace, loss of status, bad reputation, and harm upon harm.

That's aside from what's important, and that it's a sin you don't want to meet Allāh ﷻ with. Reflect on the strength and honour that come from overcoming desires and the weakness and humiliation that follow the defeat of falling into the traps of the *Shaytān* or one's desires. One who

conquers his desires feels a sense of empowerment. Those who let their desires control them experience a deep sense of defeat within themselves. Think about the outcome following the desires by looking into the lessons of the Messengers.

Look at Ādam and Yūsuf, for example. The *Shaytān* deceived Ādam ﷺ with a simple desire for a taste, a bite. It led to the fall from the blissful state that he was in. Yūsuf ﷺ fought hard against his desires, against the temptations of the wife of the ‘Azīz, and because of that he was given authority and he became established in the land. Think about what might have occurred if Yūsuf ﷺ had given in to his desires, the desires that he fought against, the desires that he said about,

قَالَ رَبِّ ٱلسِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِيٓ إِلَيْهِ...﴿ يُوسُف: ٣٣﴾

He said, “My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me… (Yūsuf:33)

He preferred prison over his desires. He was freed by the will of Allāh ﷻ and he was able to thrive and succeed after leaving prison by the will of Allāh ﷻ, because he controlled himself and avoided his desires. It’s important to have self-respect and dignity and not let your enemy –

إِنَّ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ...﴿ فَاطِر: ٦﴾

Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you;… (Fāṭir:6)

You can’t let your enemy control you. When the *Shaytān* sees someone weak in their determination and that he’s easily swayed by his desires, he takes advantage of that and leads them astray even more. When the *Shaytān* sees strength in that person — and that person attains strength from Allāh ﷻ — when he sees that strength and pride, he can only hope to catch them off guard. Allāh ﷻ compared those who follow their desires to the lowest of animals. It’s only animals who are driven by

their desires without understanding and thinking about the outcome of those desires. Humans were not created for desires. You were created for the mighty purpose of worshiping Allāh ﷻ and that can only be attained by resisting the desires. Allāh ﷻ likens those who follow their desires to dogs.

...وَلَٰكِنَّهُۥٓ أَخۡلَدَ إِلَى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُۚ فَمَثَلُهُۥ كَمَثَلِ ٱلۡكَلۡبِ...
﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف: ١٧٦﴾

...But he adhered (instead) to the earth and followed his own desire. So his example is like that of the dog... (al-ʾAʿrāf:176)

وَٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ

– our topic. He followed his desires, so what's he like?

...وَٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُۚ فَمَثَلُهُۥ كَمَثَلِ ٱلۡكَلۡبِ...

...And followed his own desire. So his example is like that of the dog...

His example is like that of a dog. He's compared to wild donkeys in another verse.

كَأَنَّهُمۡ حُمُرٞ مُّسۡتَنفِرَةٞ﴿ ٱلْمُدَّثِّر: ٥٠﴾

As if they were alarmed donkeys. (al-Muddathir:50)

فَرَّتۡ مِن قَسۡوَرَةٖ﴿ ٱلْمُدَّثِّر: ٥١﴾

Fleeing from a lion? (al-Muddathir:51)

Rebelling against one's desires can give a person strength in his *Īmān*, in his body, in his heart, and in his speech. Some of the earlier *Ulamā'* said that someone who can control his desires is stronger than one who can control or conquer a city alone by himself.

The more someone practices restraining and resisting their desires, the stronger they become. Some will adhere to the rules of Allāh ﷻ, they'll possibly love some of the rules of Allāh ﷻ, but when some rules contradict their personal desires, they'll oppose them. They'll remain compliant as long as those desires are not challenged. When the desires are challenged, they'll prioritize their own desires over what Allāh ﷻ loves. The solution lies in resisting the disease of the desires at all costs. Love and desires that are *Harām* can become compared to an illness or a disease — they are a disease. The cure is very simple; everyone has the cure for it. Resist and abandon those desires.

To encourage you to resist and abandon those desires keep in mind that when you resist the desires and the whispers of *Shaytān* you'll be granted countless *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah* benefits and blessings, much more than we can enumerate. You'll get in return far greater than what you would gain when indulging in those *Harām* desires. It's like turning away from a piece of dung, only to turn around and get a pearl in return. In fact, it's sufficient to know that truly resisting the *Harām* desires elevates an individual to a status so high in ranking, where if he were to swear by Allāh ﷻ in need of something, Allāh ﷻ will fulfill it.

When you think about the seven categories of the people whom Allāh ﷻ will shade under His Throne on the day when there's no shades except His — in that famous *Hadīth* that you all know — you'll realize when you reflect on that *Hadīth* that the common denominator among all seven categories, the reason they earned that special shade from Allāh ﷻ, is by resisting their desires.

After you resist your desires, the desires of the *Nafs* and the temptations of the *Shaytān*, you need to also resist and overcome the desires of people as well. Don't conform to the desires and wishes of anyone when they contradict the principles of Allāh's *Sharī'ah* no matter who they are. Allāh ﷻ told His Messenger,

وَلَا يَصُدُّنَّكَ عَنْ ءَايَـٰتِ ٱللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أُنزِلَتْ إِلَيْكَ...
﴿ ٱلْقَصَص: ٨٧﴾

Don't let them (O Muhammad) turn you away from teaching the Āyāt… (al-Ḳaṣaṣ:87)

Remain unaffected by their negativity. Disregard their comments and hostility and maintain your focus without any concern for them. Allāh ﷻ supports His Words and He supports the efforts of every true, righteous, *Dā'īyyah* that calls for the Word of Allāh ﷻ. That's all you need. Allāh ﷻ then told him,

...وَٱدْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ...﴿ ٱلْقَصَص: ٨٧﴾

...And invite (people) to your Lord…(al-Ḳaṣaṣ:87)

Continue calling people to *Tawhīd*.

...وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ﴿ ٱلْقَصَص: ٨٧﴾

...Don't be among the Mushrikīn. (al-Ḳaṣaṣ:87)

Don't follow what people love and desire on the account of what Allāh ﷻ loves and desires, even if you're only a one-man nation standing on your own. Not even a father or a mother. If a father and mother follow their desires in that which contradicts what Allāh ﷻ loves, you can't follow them. You can't follow a Shaykh that follows what contradicts what Allāh ﷻ loves.

To truly love Allāh ﷻ you need to make what pleases Allāh ﷻ your priority over everything. This means that you should desire and act in a way that Allāh ﷻ loves, even if it disappoints everyone around you. It might involve issues of *Tawhīd*, where you set yourself apart from your environment due to them being against *Tawhīd* or concepts of *Tawhīd*,

and your *Da'wah* to them is not effective. It could be due to current events and matters like, for example, defending the *Muwahiddīn.* It could be due to standing up for those who are unjustly imprisoned for the sake of Allāh ﷻ. It could be because you're voicing your concern and defending our sisters in the camps while others choose to slander them.

Distinguishing yourself from your surroundings could also be due to sins that have become widespread and normalized. Learn from the Messenger ﷺ and other messengers who stood against the entire world of their time. Their focus and efforts were only on loving Allāh ﷻ, which means prioritizing what Allāh ﷻ wants. They didn't let criticism and hostility affect them, nor did it make them give up on their *Da'wah*. Allāh ﷻ said about Ibrāhīm,

إِنَّ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِّلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ١٢٠﴾

Verily, Ibrāhīm was an Ummah, or a nation, obedient to Allāh, Hanīf (i.e. to worship none but Allāh), and he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikīn. (an-Naḥl:120)

Mujāhid said, "It means he was a believer alone while everyone during that time was a disbeliever."[1] None of the messengers ﷺ received a warm welcome from their people. They all faced hostility. They stood against the globe of their time delivering the Message of Allāh ﷻ, elevating the word of Allāh ﷻ, battling against the enemies of Allāh ﷻ. They faced hostility from both the near and far for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, but they prioritized what Allāh ﷻ loves over what people around them loved. I don't need to elaborate on this point very much because we have

[1] Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 4/525; Ṭ. Dār Ṭayyibah, 4/611

an entire ongoing series, the *Ghurabā'* series, the Stranger series, that addresses this point in deep detail.

The summary of this talk — and I'll give it to you in a practical way that everyone will understand — is that sometimes you'll notice couples who get married and one of the spouses may have something that they dislike — there are matters in life that one dislikes — but after marrying someone and truly loving that spouse, their love for their spouse will get them to love what they previously disliked. Certain foods, maybe coffee, or perfumes, or different habits like sleeping late or sleeping early. What happens is, they start to love what they once hated and they become accustomed to what they once hated because of their love for their spouse. Their change is driven by their deep love for their spouse. Their love for their spouse changed their habits or some of what they like and dislike.

...وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَثَلُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ٦٠﴾

...And Allāh ﷻ has the Supreme Examples... (an-Naḥl:60)

In order to love Allāh ﷻ you must love what Allāh ﷻ loves and hate what Allāh ﷻ dislikes — your desires need to be, as I said, subservient to what Allāh ﷻ loves. You should prioritize what Allāh ﷻ loves and what Allāh ﷻ wants above your own feelings and desires as well as the feelings and desires of everyone else. Don't express crocodile tears and insincere emotions to a lecture regarding the love of Allāh ﷻ or his Messenger ﷺ if you don't genuinely love what they love. Love is disingenuous if you don't love what they love.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا۟ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَـٰلَهُمْ
﴿ مُحَمَّد: ٩﴾

That is because they disliked what Allāh revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds. (Muḥammad:9)

It's essential to detest what they detest. The love of Allāh ﷻ and love of His enemies and the love of His enemies' beliefs cannot coexist in the same heart. This is a very long essential topic, and I wanted to address several other points but because of the time, we'll stop right here.

Learning about Allāh, His Qualities, and Blessings

We mentioned how essential it is for a believer to love Allāh ﷻ, and we mentioned that when the Messenger ﷺ told the *Sahābah* that they will be with those whom they love, when he said,

أَنْتَ مَعَ مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ

You will be with those whom you love.[1]

Anas ﷺ said,

مَا رَأَيْتُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَرِحُوا بِشَيْءٍ بَعْدَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِثْلَ فَرَحِهِمْ بِهَا

After their faith in Islām, nothing brought the Sahābah greater joy (than knowing they will be with those whom they love).[2]

Nothing brought the *Sahābah* greater joy than knowing they will be with those whom they love. They were thrilled to realize that the love of Allāh ﷻ raises their rank and that they would be with those whom they love. They understood that being honest with Allāh ﷻ in their love for Him would bring them rewards and levels in *Jannah* that few other actions could achieve. Certain acts of *'Ibādah* may have shortcomings

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 3688, Sahih Muslim 2639

[2] Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 6/180

when performing them. A believer is always in doubt of his actions no matter how sincere and good they appear to be.

وَٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَآ ءَاتَواْ وَّقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُون : ٦٠﴾

And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord. (al-Muʾminūn:60)

However, if a person truly dedicates their heart to loving Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, this sincere love can compensate for the deficiencies in their other *'Ibādāt*. This love can elevate one to higher ranks in *Jannah* that other *'Ibādāt* alone might not have been enough to get him to, and that's why Anas ﷺ also said,

فَأَنَا أُحِبُّ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَأَبَا بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ، فَأَرْجُو أَنْ أَكُونَ مَعَهُمْ، وَإِنْ لَمْ أَعْمَلْ بِأَعْمَالِهِمْ

I love Allāh ﷻ and the Messenger ﷺ and I love Abu Bakr and I love 'Umar and I hope that I will be amongst them even though I didn't act like them.[1]

The love of Allāh ﷻ makes the tiniest acts of *'Ibādah* mighty, and it brings blessings and sweetness to the simplest acts of *'Ibādah*. A hardworking person who's a *Sābiqun bil-Khayrāt* and a person who's struggling to perform his deeds, a *Dhālimun li-Nafsih* or a *Muqtasid*, they will not succeed in their *'Ibādah* without the love of Allāh ﷻ. Having said that, it's important to remember that actions are a fundamental aspect of our faith. Actions devoid of the love of Allāh ﷻ lack true essence, and similarly, love that is not accompanied by action cannot be considered

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 3688, Sahih Muslim 2639d

genuine love. To demonstrate one's love for Allāh ﷻ, or to seek the Love of Allāh ﷻ, or to elevate oneself in their ranks of the love of Allāh ﷻ, an individual must substantiate his love through his actions.

Now the question after this introduction and after our last few talks is, *"What's the path to loving* Allāh ﷻ*?", "What are the factors that lead to loving* Allāh ﷻ*?", "What are the practical steps that lead to loving* Allāh ﷻ*?"* When a person's heart is filled with the love of Allāh ﷻ, it leads to amazing results that are reflected in one's *'Ibādah* and in one's actions. The love of Allāh ﷻ creates a sense of *'Ubūdīyyah* that nothing else can provide. So what factors lead to loving Allāh ﷻ? Ibn Al-Qayyim[1] listed ten factors and other *Ulamā'* mentioned other factors as well. We'll talk about some of them.

I believe the first and most important one, that we touched upon many times in our talks — and it's okay to repeat it again and again, we'll repeat it through different ways — the first one is knowledge of Allāh ﷻ. Your first step in loving Allāh ﷻ is to learn about Allāh ﷻ and His *Ni'am* over you. Specifically for this matter, one needs to focus on knowledge of Allāh ﷻ's Names and Qualities. One must observe and understand these Names and Qualities and experience their beauty and their principles.

When the *Mu'tazilah* and *Jahmīyyah* denied the Attributes of Allāh ﷻ, they were likened to bandits. Why? Because by rejecting the Qualities of Allāh ﷻ they robbed individuals of the opportunity to establish a genuine connection with Allāh ﷻ. A highway robber obstructs an individual's journey to their destination by seizing their possessions or by killing them. The *Mu'tazilah* and *Jahmīyyah* and others who denied the Qualities of Allāh ﷻ, they hinder and obstruct the hearts from attaining

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/381; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/18

their ultimate goal of reaching Allāh ﷻ in *'Ubūdīyyah*. The *Qur'ān* mentions the Names and Attributes of Allāh ﷻ and the Actions of Allāh ﷻ more than it talks about eating, drinking, marriage, and *Jannah*.

The verses that include Allāh ﷻ's Names and Qualities are more significant than those that talk about the afterlife, as Ibn Taymiyyah stated. In fact, this topic is so great that the greatest verse in the *Qur'ān* is *Āyat Al-Kursi* because it consists of Names and Attributes of Allāh ﷻ. And likewise, the greatest *Sūrah*, *Al-Fātihah*, has many of the Attributes of Allāh ﷻ.

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ﴿ ٱلْفَاتِحَة : ٢﴾

(All) praise is (due) to Allāh, Lord of the worlds, (al-Fātiḥah:2)

ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ﴿ ٱلْفَاتِحَة : ٣﴾

The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, (al-Fātiḥah:3)

مَـٰلِكِ يَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ﴿ ٱلْفَاتِحَة : ٤﴾

Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. (al-Fātiḥah:4)

And Al-*Ikhlās*, which is one-third of the *Qur'ān*, it also has Qualities of Allāh ﷻ –

...أَحَدٌ...ٱلصَّمَدُ...لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ﴿ ٱلْإِخْلَاص : ١-٣﴾

Say, ˹O Prophet,˺ "He is Allāh—One ˹and Indivisible˺; Allāh—the sustainer ˹needed by all˺. He has never had offspring, nor was He born. (al-ʾIkhlāṣ:1-3)

In Sahīh Muslim[1], when the Messenger ﷺ sent a *Sahābi* on an expedition and he would lead the congregation in *Salāh*. He would recite as usual, but at the end of the recitation, he would always end it with,

قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ...

When they returned to the Messenger ﷺ, they mentioned that to the Messenger ﷺ and he told them to ask him why he does that. He said,

لِأَنَّهَا صِفَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَأَنَا أُحِبُّ أَنْ أَقْرَأَ بِهَا

It has an Attribute of Ar-Rahmān and because of that, I love to recite it.

And the Messenger ﷺ responded and said,

أَخْبِرُوهُ أَنَّ الله يُحِبُّهُ

Inform him that Allāh ﷻ *loves him.*

The Qualities of Allāh ﷻ in that simple, short *Sūrah* made him love Allāh ﷻ, and in return Allāh ﷻ loved him back. Imagine if you dwell on many of Allāh ﷻ's Names and Qualities. The Qualities of Allāh ﷻ in that simple short *Sūrah*, Ahad and Samad alone by themselves, and their implications on your life are sufficient to change your entire life.

When the *Sahābah* started an *'Ibādah*, they would continue with that *'Ibādah* throughout their lives. Imagine fasting on Mondays and Thursdays or fasting every other day for years and decades. Imagine waking up for *Qiyām* every single day of your life for days, years, and decades. What brought them sweetness to that *'Ibādah* and their biggest inspiration and boost to continue is knowledge about Allāh ﷻ.

[1] Sahih Muslim 813

رَّبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَمَا بَيۡنَهُمَا فَٱعۡبُدۡهُ وَٱصۡطَبِرۡ لِعِبَٰدَتِهِۦۚ هَلۡ تَعۡلَمُ لَهُۥ سَمِيّٗا﴿ مَرْيَم : ٦٥﴾

Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them - so worship Him and have patience for His worship. Do you know of any similarity to Him? (Maryam:65)

This verse is ordering *'Ibādah*. It starts with the Qualities of Allāh ﷻ and it ends with them. The start and end of the verse is the boost to performing and continuing in *'Ibādah* and finding sweetness in it.

رَّبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَمَا بَيۡنَهُمَا...﴿ مَرْيَم : ٦٥﴾

Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them ... (Maryam:65)

You're worshiping Him because you love Him, because He's the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what's between them and He sustains them.

...فَٱعۡبُدۡهُ وَٱصۡطَبِرۡ لِعِبَٰدَتِهِۦۚ...﴿ مَرْيَم : ٦٥﴾

...So worship Him and have patience for His worship…(Maryam:65)

Wa-ṣṭabir means *Iṣbir*, be patient, same meaning. They both mean be patient in *'Ibādah*. But there's a linguistic rule in Arabic that says,

زِيَادَةُ الْمَبَانِي تَدُلُّ عَلَى زِيَادَةِ الْمَعَانِي

An increase in the structures (of words) indicates an increase in meanings.

When there's an additional letter added to the root of a word, like here the *'Ṭaa'* is added, it gives more emphasis and meaning. It's an

exaggerated emphasized form of patient. But here is where the boost in sweetness comes from.

...هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُۥ سَمِيًّا ﴿مَرْيَم : ٦٥﴾

...Do you know of any similarity to Him? (Maryam:65)

You worship Him because of His Qualities and that there's no one equal or similar or comparable to Him or to His Attributes. If one believes in Allāh ﷻ's Qualities, it will inherit good pure deeds. That's why the verse talking about *'Ibādah* starts with Qualities and ends with Qualities.

Take Names of Allāh ﷻ and His Qualities and contemplate to see how they reflect on your day-to-day life. *Al-Hafīdh*, the All-Protecting – remember He protects what's in the heavens and the earth and what's between them. He protects his servants from doubts, desires, and harms. Take the quality and remember how Allāh ﷻ protected you personally. You missed an accident by moments and could have lost your life. Allāh ﷻ saved your child or your loved one from a difficult situation or imminent harm. Who didn't go through such situations? Some [situations] that we know Allāh ﷻ protected us in and others that we don't know He protected us.

Every Name of Allāh ﷻ and every Attribute of His greatness calls for a special kind of love for Allāh ﷻ. *Al-Karīm*, the Generous, the All-Generous, you love Him for His generosity. *Al-Jalīl*, the Majestic, you love Him for His Majesty. And when you reflect on his name *Ar-Rahīm*, for example, the Most Merciful, you love Him for His Mercy. The more a person knows about Allāh ﷻ, the more love, respect, and fear grow within him. So what we're trying to emphasize is that the journey to loving Allāh ﷻ begins at the gate of truly understanding who Allāh ﷻ is. And that's why Ibn Taymiyyah said,

وَأَصْلُ الْمَحَبَّةِ هُوَ مَعْرِفَةُ اللَّهِ ﷻ

And the foundation of love is the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ [1]

When someone is unaware of their Creator and they don't recognize His greatness, they will not have proper love for him, in fact, they'll treat Allāh ﷻ in a way that doesn't reflect His Majesty and Perfection. This can also lead to people loving their own possessions and their own wealth more than they love Allāh ﷻ, and they give them priority over Allāh ﷻ, *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. Beneficial knowledge about Allāh ﷻ isn't just about what's appealing to the mind.

Many people can talk beautifully and impressively about Allāh ﷻ, but when you look at their actions, they don't match their words! They don't have any fear, piety, respect, reverence, or *Walā'* and *Barā'*. They don't have that in their lives, but when they talk, they speak about Allāh eloquently. It's not about learning the principles and speaking to the emotions.

This knowledge should speak to both the mind and the heart. Knowledge about Allāh ﷻ must engage the mind and the heart. This engagement should continue until the message truly resonates within the hearts and feelings; it must create a stable sense of faith in the hearts that reflects in the actions and the behaviour.

وَلِيَعْلَمَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُواْ بِهِۦ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُۥ قُلُوبُهُمْ...﴿ ٱلْحَجّ : ٥٤﴾

And so those who were given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord and (therefore) believe in it, and their hearts humbly submit to it… (al-Ḥajj:54)

Wali-ya'lama – knowledge! Knowledge is not enough. The verse then says, *Fatukhbita lahu qulūbuhum*. After knowledge, the hearts need

[1] Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā, T. Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 10/84

to submit to that knowledge. You attain the knowledge, then the heart submits, and then it shows on one's actions and behaviours.

To deepen your love for Allāh ﷻ, concentrate on recognizing your blessings in relationship to His Attributes. Love grows when you recognize the Blessings, Graces, and Favours of Allāh ﷻ. The more you reflect on His Blessings, on His *Ihsān*, on His *Ni'am*, and on the goodness that He gave you, the stronger your love for Him will be. That love gains sweetness when you attach the *Ni'am* to his Names and Qualities. "*Al-Karīm* gave me that."

The affection we hold for our mothers is deep-seated, and it's deep-seated because it stems from their sacrifices, their unwavering support, and their steadfast loyalty. In light of this, contemplate the countless blessings that Allāh ﷻ has bestowed upon us throughout our lives. Every moment, even in the briefest instant, you're surrounded by innumerable blessings from Allāh ﷻ. The most significant, righteous deed that fosters and cultivates love of Allāh ﷻ is the remembrance of blessings and their connection to the Bestower. It's so essential for your *Īmān* and for your love of Allāh ﷻ that Allāh ﷻ encouraged this throughout the *Qur'ān*.

...فَٱذْكُرُوٓاْ ءَالَآءَ ٱللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف : ٦٩﴾

...Remember the Graces of Allāh ﷻ that He bestowed upon you if you want to succeed. (al-ʾAʿrāf:69)

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ هَلْ مِنْ خَٰلِقٍ غَيْرُ ٱللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ...﴿ فَاطِر : ٣﴾

O mankind, remember the favour of Allāh upon you. Is there any creator other than Allāh who provides for you from the heaven and earth?... (Fāṭir:3)

...وَٱذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَإِن كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلِهِۦ لَمِنَ ٱلضَّآلِّينَ
﴿ ٱلْبَقَرَة : ١٩٨﴾

...And remember Him, as He has guided you, for indeed, you were before that among those astray. (al-Baqarah:198)

It's impossible to list all of Allāh ﷻ's blessings, as we already discussed. However, we should make an effort to recognize and count some of them. The blessings of guidance and protection, the blessing of well-being, the blessing of sustenance and preservation, the blessing of concealing our sins and faults, the blessing of His Kindness and Mercy. We hold deep love for Him due to His boundless *Ihsān*, *Ni'am*, and Generosity over us. Our love for Allāh ﷻ stems from the countless blessings that He's granted us, blessings that are beyond enumeration.

When it comes to the alleviation of our difficulties, it's impossible to quantify the numerous trials and tribulations from which He has rescued us, both those that we're aware of and those that remain unknown to us. If someone offered you his daughter for marriage or made the marriage easy for you, he captivates you with that simple act, and you sit and speak about it to your children, your grandchildren, and even your great-grandchildren. How many times have you sat with your family members remembering the *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻ?

One should sit with his family and discuss the *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻ and have his children write them down, and he as an adult should write them down. This is an established *'Ibādah* many are mindless of. In Sahīh Muslim[1] the Messenger ﷺ walked upon his companions gathering, and he said, "Why are you gathering here?" They said,

جَلَسْنَا نَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ وَنَحْمَدُهُ عَلَى مَا هَدَانَا لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنَّ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا

[1] Sahih Muslim 2701

We're sitting here to remember Allāh ﷻ and to praise Him for guiding us to Islām and bestowing favours upon us.

They were sitting remembering some of Allāh ﷻ's Favours, and the Messenger ﷺ said,

آللَّهِ مَا أَجْلَسَكُمْ إِلَّا ذَاكَ؟

By Allāh, *nothing made you sit together except that?*

They said there was no other purpose. The Messenger ﷺ told them,

أَمَا إِنِّي لَمْ أَسْتَحْلِفْكُمْ تُهْمَةً لَكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُ أَتَانِي جِبْرِيلُ فَأَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّ اللَّهَ ﷻ يُبَاهِي بِكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةَ

"I don't suspect you, but Jibrīl came to me and told me that Allāh ﷻ was talking proudly about you to the angels."

One night Al-Fudayl Ibn 'Iyād and Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah sat all night until the morning talking about the blessings they had received. Sufyān kept saying, "Allāh ﷻ blessed us with this. Allāh ﷻ blessed us with that. He has done this for us he has done that for us."[1] When Allāh ﷻ blessed the Messenger ﷺ and the *Sahābah* with some *Ni'am*, he reminded them of this. He wanted them to continuously remember these *Ni'am*. Verses in Sūrat Al-Anfāl were revealed to remind the *Sahābah* of the great blessings that were bestowed upon them. The blessing of Victory,

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَٱسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّى مُمِدُّكُم بِأَلْفٍ مِّنَ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ ﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال : ٩﴾

[1] Al-Shukr li Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā, Ṭ. Al-Maktab Al-Islāmī, 1/41

(Remember) when you were asking help of your Lord, and He answered you, "Indeed, I will reinforce you with a thousand from the angels, following one another." (al-ʾAnfāl:9)

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشۡرَىٰ وَلِتَطۡمَئِنَّ بِهِۦ قُلُوبُكُمۡ...﴿ ٱلۡأَنفَال : ١٠﴾

And Allāh made it not but good tidings and so that your hearts would be assured thereby… (al-ʾAnfāl:10)

Blessing after blessing within the battle — the slumber, the rain, the angels — He wanted them to remember these blessings. The same thing after *Al-Ahzāb*. After *Al-Ahzāb* Allāh ﷻ said,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَةَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ إِذۡ جَآءَتۡكُمۡ جُنُودٞ فَأَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ رِيحٗا وَجُنُودٗا لَّمۡ تَرَوۡهَا...﴿ ٱلۡأَحۡزَاب : ٩﴾

O you who have believed, remember the favour of Allāh upon you when armies came to (attack) you and We sent upon them a wind and armies (of angels) you did not see. (al-ʾAḥzāb:9)

Remember Allāh ﷻ's Blessing over you, because it's an *'Ibādah*, and that's an *'Ibādah* that leads to you loving Allāh ﷻ. Hearts, as we've said many times, are naturally inclined to love those who treat them well and to dislike those who do wrong to them. When one is blessed with so many *Ni'am* and he takes them for granted, he will not realize his love for Allāh ﷻ. You usually remember *Ni'am* when they're taken away. You need to remember the *Ni'am* while you still have them and to thank Allāh ﷻ for them so you can attain love for Allāh ﷻ. Who treats you better than Allāh ﷻ? If you love your parents for all the good they've done for you, then Allāh ﷻ has given you way more than that. No one is more generous to you than Allāh ﷻ. His Kindness, His *Ihsān*, His *Ni'am* over you are in every moment of your life. We experience His Goodness in all

circumstances and it's impossible to fully grasp the different forms of *Ni'am* that He bestowed upon us. Look at simple things that go unnoticed. On average, we breathe in and out approximately twenty-five thousand times a day, and imagine how much greater and more significant the blessings beyond this are, that you're given that you don't notice. In addition to that, remember that Allāh ﷻ protects you from various forms of harm that may be directed towards you. Many are unaware that the *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻ protecting you from harm may be equivalent or more than the abundance of *Ni'am* you're already getting.

So the summary of this talk is that the first practical factor or step to attaining the love of Allāh ﷻ is to learn about Allāh ﷻ. If you want to love Allāh, learn about Allāh ﷻ through His Names and through His Qualities. List the blessings of Allāh ﷻ. Attach the blessings to Allāh ﷻ and to His Qualities. *Al-Karīm* gave us shelter and housing, *Al-Hafīdh* protected us from harm and from evil, and so on.

Neediness and Desperation to Allāh at All Times

In order to understand *'Ubūdīyyah* one needs to realize that he is in desperate need for Allāh ﷻ because he was created weak.

...وَخُلِقَ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنُ ضَعِيفًا﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ٢٨﴾

...And mankind was created weak. (an-Nisā':28)

You're weak as a human being. You need Allāh ﷻ. You need *'Ibādah*. You're desperate for it. That's the essence of *'Ibādah*, *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ. A fundamental truth about our existence is that we've been created by Allāh ﷻ and He continuously supports and sustains us. So a

critical quality that is the basis of *'Ubūdīyyah* to Allāh ﷻ is to realize and acquire neediness to Allāh ﷻ. It's good to turn to Allāh ﷻ in desperate situations, but it's wrong to only show your need to Allāh ﷻ in those desperate situations. You constantly need Allāh ﷻ. We shouldn't only express our need during times of weakness or when one is ill or unemployed or when he's scared or facing difficult challenges.

Our need for Allāh ﷻ shouldn't be something that's occasional, exceptional, or accidental. It's essential every moment of our lives, and we have to demonstrate that. It's essential for us to recognize our need to Allāh ﷻ outwardly and inwardly, in every situation and in every moment of our lives. It's a concept that's reiterated in the *Qur'ān* through different ways. Allāh ﷻ said,

...لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِٱللَّهِ...﴿ ٱلْكَهْف: ٣٩﴾

...There is no power except in Allāh... (al-Kahf:39)

...وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِٱللَّهِ...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ١٢٧﴾

...And your patience is not but through Allāh... (an-Naḥl:127)

...وَمَا تَوْفِيقِىٓ إِلَّا بِٱللَّهِ...﴿ هُود: ٨٨﴾

...And my success is not but through Allāh... (Hūd:8)

No power, no *Tawfīq*, and no patience but with Allāh ﷻ. So the point is that *'Ibādah* is about showing neediness to Allāh ﷻ at all times. Ibn Al-Qayyim related a story about someone knowledgeable, as he stated, and that person said, "I approach Allāh ﷻ through all gates to good deeds. Every time I tried to enter a gate for a good deed it was crowded and I couldn't get in," meaning people crowded around other *'Ibādāt*. They're doing other popular *'Ibādāt* that are known amongst people. He said,

"Then I entered the gate of *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ, I entered the gate of neediness to Allāh ﷻ and it turned out to be the closest gate to Allāh ﷻ and the widest gate to Him." And he said, "There was no one blocking or hindering that gate." Meaning, it's an *'Ibādah* that's not widely embraced like other *'Ibādāt*. A wide gate to Allāh ﷻ or a close gate to Allāh ﷻ means it possesses significant benefits for one's *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. No one is blocking or hindering it. He's trying to say that it's an *'Ibādah* that's very simple yet not many people are performing it. What's the effect or impact or benefit of this *'Ibādah*? "As soon as I stepped onto the threshold," he said, "Allāh ﷻ took me in and welcomed me in."[1] And what more do you need than that?

Your neediness to Allāh ﷻ is *'Ibādah* so it's attained like an *'Ibādah* is attained, and we spoke about that. You need to learn about Allāh ﷻ, about His Names, about His Qualities, and the effects of those Names and Qualities on the creation around us. Once you realize this, you'll realize how desperately you need Allāh ﷻ. You need to also look at your weaknesses. A person who understands their true worth and powers realizes that no matter how much power they have, or status or wealth they achieve, they are weak and in desperate need of Allāh ﷻ.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ أَنتُمُ ٱلْفُقَرَآءُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلْغَنِيُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ ﴿ فَاطِر: ١٥﴾

O mankind, you are those in need of Allāh, while Allāh is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy. (Fāṭir:15)

Neediness to Allāh ﷻ appeared on the outward appearance of the Messenger ﷺ and the *Salaf*, just as it manifested in them inwardly. They

[1] Madārij al-Sālikīn li Ibn al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm, 2/51; Ṭ. Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1/429

went to the extent of using their outward appearances to boost their inner *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ. Ibn Rajab mentioned that the *Tābi'ī* from Basra, Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdillāh Ash-Shikhīr, had a nephew who was imprisoned. So he wore tattered clothes and he went with a stick and he said, "I'm going to show my need to Allāh ﷻ so that He will answer my *Du'ā*."[1] *'Ibādāt* are intertwined. Your neediness to Allāh ﷻ is intertwined with submission to Allāh, with humility to Allāh ﷻ, with sincerity to Allāh ﷻ, and with reverence to Allāh ﷻ among other *'Ibādāt*.

What Mutarrif was doing was not among the *Bid'ah* of the deviant sects, because when the Messenger ﷺ went to *Salāt Al-Istisqā'*, his appearance showed his desperate need and humility to Allāh ﷻ.

خَرَجَ اَلنَّبِيُّ ﷺ مُتَوَاضِعًا، مُتَبَذِّلًا، مُتَخَشِّعًا، مُتَرَسِّلًا، مُتَضَرِّعًا، فَصَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ...

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ went out (of Al-Madīnah, to pray for rain) humbling (himself), wearing rough clothes, submissive, walking slowly, supplicating (to Allāh). Then, he offered two Rak'āt…[2]

Each of those five descriptions in that *Hadīth* show that he approached Salāt Al- Istisqā with an apparent sense of need. His appearance showed his need to Allāh, his submission to Allāh, and his humility to Allāh ﷻ. *Mutawāḍi'an* – It was clearly visible, *Mutakhashshi'an* – humble, *Mutarassilan* – means his walk even showed desperate humility to Allāh ﷻ. *Mutaḍarri'an* – *Iftiqār* and humility in *Du'ā*. *Mutabadhdhilan* – his casual clothes, not his special clothes. Even the clothes that he chose for that moment were clothes that showed his desperate need to Allāh ﷻ. In other occasions, like in *Jumu'ah*, he would

[1] Jāmiʿ Al-ʿUlūm wa Al-Ḥikam, Ṭ. Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1/270; Ṭ. Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1/251; Ṭ. Dār as-Salām, 1/288

[2] Sunan Ibn Majah 1266

wear special clothing and he encouraged us to wear the best of our clothing.

How can we not show our neediness to Allāh ﷻ when everything we have is from Allāh ﷻ?

وَمَا بِكُم مِّن نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ ٱللَّهِ...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ٥٣﴾

And whatever you have of favour it is from Allāh… (an-Naḥl:53)

Don't ever let it cross your mind that you've attained any success on your own. Show your need to Allāh ﷻ in your most successful moments, just like you show your need in the biggest of your trials. Humble yourself to the One Who granted you everything. You're poor without Allāh ﷻ and you're rich with Him. You thank Him for every tiny blessing, for every heartbeat, for every moment of your life. You thank Him for the blessing of you realizing that you know everything is from Him and that you desperately need Him.

The fact that you know how desperate you are to Allāh ﷻ, that fact itself is something you should thank Allāh ﷻ for. Awareness that it's from Allāh ﷻ is *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ. It humbles one, it diminishes one's pride, it makes one recognize their dependence on Allāh ﷻ. It makes one turn to Allāh ﷻ for power and help and in seeking guidance and support.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "The more a person humbles themselves before Allāh ﷻ and the more they recognize and show their *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ, the closer they become to Allāh ﷻ and the more honoured they are to Him."[1] Allāh ﷻ is most generous when we exhibit that we are most needy of Him. When we show our desperation and *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ He is Most

[1] Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā, T. Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 1/39

Generous. People are the opposite, they overlook and neglect you when you show need for them. And this topic is the meaning of

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِالله

– there's no power nor strength in you or in anyone or anything except with Allāh ﷻ, and you need Allāh ﷻ at all times. You're in desperate need for Allāh ﷻ to guide you. Guidance is only from Allāh ﷻ. Look at this *Hadīth Qudsi*[1] and how it shows that one is desperately in need of Allāh ﷻ.

يَا عِبَادِي! كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ فَاسْتَهْدُونِي أَهْدِكُمْ

O My servants, all of you are astray except those whom I have guided, so seek guidance from Me and I shall guide you.

Don't say that it was books or the internet or some *Shuyūkh* who guided you, it was Allāh ﷻ who guided you. Don't think for a moment it was you who researched and found *Hidāyah*, it was Allāh ﷻ who guided you and you desperately need Allāh ﷻ to continue being guided. *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ is to show that you had no might and no power in this. "My servants all of you are astray except those who I guided. Seek guidance of Me and I will guide you."

Some may say, "I'm strong in resisting sins or a certain sin, or I'm strong in resisting *Kufr* or *Shirk*," — that's a deficiency in this matter. You always need the help of Allāh ﷻ no matter how strong you think you are. Ibrāhīm *Khalīlullāh*, the father of *'millata Ibrāhīma ḥanīfā'*. It's from the completeness of Ibrāhīm's *Tawhīd* that our Messenger ﷺ was ordered to follow in his footsteps.

[1] Sahih Muslim 2577

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ أَنِ ٱتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ حَنِيفًا...﴿ ٱلنَّحْل: ١٢٣﴾

Then We revealed to you, (O Muhammad), to follow the religion of Ibrāhīm, inclining toward truth. (an-Naḥl:123)

With all that and more, he showed his *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ and he asked Allāh ﷻ to save him and his offspring from *Shirk*.

...وَٱجْنُبْنِى وَبَنِىَّ أَن نَّعْبُدَ ٱلْأَصْنَامَ﴿ إِبْرَاهِيم: ٣٥﴾

...And keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols. (ʾIbrāhīm:35)

Yūsuf ﷺ didn't say, "I'm the noble one, and I'm the son of the noble one, Ya'qūb, and I'm the grandson of the noble one Ishāq, and I'm the great-grandson of the noble one Ibrāhīm". He didn't say, "I descended from a line of devout prophets and I was raised by a prophet so I can resist sins." Instead he showed his need to Allāh ﷻ.

...وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّى كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿ يُوسُف: ٣٣﴾

And if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and (thus) be of the ignorant. (Yūsuf:33)

He showed his need to Allāh ﷻ and he sought His aid to avoid sins. Show your need to Allāh ﷻ for your beverages, for your food, for your water no matter how full your refrigerator is. Your *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ is to realize you had no power and no strength in bringing food to the table, even if you worked a double and a triple shift. He's the one who provided you with that food.

يَا عِبَادِي! كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ، فَاسْتَطْعِمُونِي أُطْعِمْكُمْ

My servants! You're all hungry except the ones who I feed, so seek food from Me and I will feed you.

You also don't even have control or strength when it comes to clothing yourself and your family, it's Allāh ﷻ's Blessing. So you need to show your need to Allāh ﷻ.

يَا عِبَادِي! كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ، فَاسْتَكْسُونِي أَكْسُكُمْ

My servants! You're all naked except the ones who I clothed, so seek clothing from Me and I will clothe you.

Even your repentance, you seek that from Allāh ﷻ.

يَا عِبَادِي! إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ، وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ

My servants you sin day and night and I forgive the sins so seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you.

All those blessings that you have can be taken away in the blink of an eye and they can be given to someone else. A simple blood clot or a simple tumour can render you into history within a matter of days.

Showing your need to Allāh ﷻ brings you closer to Allāh ﷻ, it sets you on the Path of Allāh ﷻ, it attains you the love of Allāh ﷻ, and it opens a gate that wouldn't be accessible through any other means. When you're in the state of *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ, He will look after you. The more *Iftiqār* you express to Allāh ﷻ the more generous He is to you. But when you say, "I'm self-reliant, I did it on my own", that's when He will abandon you.

كَلَّآ إِنَّ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ لَيَطْغَىٰٓ ﴿ ٱلْعَلَق: ٦ ﴾

No! (But) indeed, man transgresses. (al-ʿAlaq:6)

أَن رَّءَاهُ ٱسْتَغْنَىٰٓ﴿ ٱلْعَلَق: ٧﴾

Because he sees himself self-sufficient. (al-ʿAlaq:7)

What power do we have and who are we to say that we're self-reliant? When an individual takes satisfaction and pride in their possessions and they attribute that to themselves alone, they're not experiencing the proper state of *Iftiqār*. A person who's wealthy yet ascribes attaining that wealth from Allāh ﷻ is in the state of *Iftiqār*.

However, if they assert their independence, self-sufficiency, or self-reliance, then they haven't attained the state of *Iftiqār*. This applies to other blessings like your health, your *Hidāyah*, your sleep, your waking, your resting, your seeing, your hearing, your thinking, using the bathroom, your abilities, your intelligence, your wisdom, your status, your job, your career, your knowledge, your spouses, your children — all those are graces and blessings from Allāh ﷻ who said,

...وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُۥ ظَٰهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً...﴿ لُقْمَان: ٢٠﴾

...And amply bestowed upon you His favours, (both) apparent and unapparent?... (Luqmān:20)

Once you think you're independent or self-sufficient, you will be destroyed. You destroy yourself with that. Any deficiency in this matter is setting yourself up for failure *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. We went over the *Du'ā* many times that's supposed to be a part of your *Adhkār* in the morning and evening.

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّومُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيثُ، أَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

O Ever-Living, O Self-Sustaining, by Your mercy I seek help; rectify all my affairs, and do not entrust me to myself even for the blink of an eye.[1]

Yā *Allāh*! Don't leave me to myself not even for a moment. If Allāh ﷻ leaves you for an instant, you're doomed.

This one example will show you success and failure as it pertains to this matter, and it shows you how dangerous it is to think you're self-sufficient when it comes to Allāh ﷻ. The more you perfect your *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ, the more your rank will change to the better *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. The Messenger ﷺ was the best of mankind and his *Sahābah* were the best generation. In the battle of Badr, when they showed their deep *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ,

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَٱسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّى مُمِدُّكُم بِأَلْفٍ مِّنَ ٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال: ٩﴾

(Remember) when you were asking help of your Lord, and He answered you, "Indeed, I will reinforce you with a thousand from the angels, following one another." (al-ʾAnfāl:9)

When they showed their deep *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ, their desperation to Allāh ﷻ, they expressed their need to Allāh ﷻ and their humility, and they cried to Allāh ﷻ, He reinforced them with forces and hosts from the heavens.

...بِأَلْفٍ مِّنَ ٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ﴿ ٱلْأَنْفَال: ٩﴾

...A thousand from the angels, following one another." (al-ʾAnfāl:9)

[1] Al-Mustadrak ʿalā Al-Ṣaḥīḥayn li Al-Ḥākim, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/730

A thousand angels and successions and more to come. Fast forward to the Day of Hunayn. A slight deficiency on the Day of Hunayn caused a retreat in the beginning of the battle.

...وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ ۙ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنكُمْ شَيْـًٔا...
﴿ ٱلتَّوْبَة: ٢٥﴾

...And [even] on the day of Ḥunayn, when your great number pleased you, but it did not avail you at all... (at-Tawbah:25)

Some, possibly even one person rejoiced at the great number of the believers. That slight deficiency of one caused twelve thousand to suffer and retreat at the beginning of the battle. The best man was amongst them, ﷺ, and they're the best generation. Allāh ﷻ taught them a lesson on this topic.

فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنكُمْ شَيْـًٔا...﴿ ٱلتَّوْبَة: ٢٥﴾

but it did not avail you at all... (at-Tawbah:25)

Numbers prove no advantage to you. It's not about numbers, it's about your *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ. When we find ourselves either outnumbered and overpowered by the enemy, or when we have the advantage over them and we outnumber and out-power them, the *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ remains unchanged in both situations.

Our strength and our power come solely from Allāh ﷻ and we're in desperate need of Allāh ﷻ in both scenarios. When everything is going well for you in this *Dunyā* or when it feels like everything is going against you, remember in both situations that you have no strength or power except through Allāh ﷻ and that you desperately need the help of Allāh ﷻ.

I gave a talk once about this and I kept repeating, "You always are in desperate need of Allāh ﷻ," and I think I did that today. So a younger brother after the *Halaqah* said, "That's your DNA." And I said, "What's the DNA?" He said, "That's the abbreviation: **D**esperate **N**eed for **A**llāh ﷻ is abbreviated DNA." And that's our DNA truly. You always are in desperate need for Allāh ﷻ. And another story I just remembered, I was invited some time ago to a gathering and it was a very wealthy person. His tone of speech lacked *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ and I advised him. I said, "Tone it down a little bit, humble yourself to Allāh ﷻ." I said, "Your tone lacks *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ and that could destroy you." There were many brothers present, and I was told he never misses a *Salāh*, ever, but that doesn't mean that a person mastered *'Ubūdīyyah* and *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ.

وَلَوْلَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِٱللَّهِ ۚ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَا۠ أَقَلَّ مِنكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿ ٱلْكَهْف: ٣٩﴾

And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, 'What Allāh willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allāh'? Although you see me less than you in wealth and children, (al-Kahf:39)

The *Qur'ān* taught us the manners about this. The days went on and the blessing of COVID came by, and brothers told me that he lost everything, and he is living now in what's considered a ghetto. He lost his businesses, his mansion, and he's renting a small house in what's referred to as a ghetto part of town. A deficiency in this matter is destructive. When someone becomes arrogant in this matter and lacks *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will make them experience weakness and humiliation. You will never be self-sufficient from Allāh ﷻ, so show Allāh ﷻ your weakness, your humility, your submission, your need, your poverty, your incapacity, your inability — show that to Allāh ﷻ! It will only gain you honour and success. This entire talk can be summarized in one line: The more you

show your *Iftiqār* to Allāh ﷻ, the richer you become in everything — *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah* matters, *Hidāyah*, *Rizq*, and everything else.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ أَنتُمُ ٱلْفُقَرَآءُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلْغَنِىُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ ﴿ فَاطِر: ١٥﴾

O mankind, you are those in need of Allāh, while Allāh is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy. (Fāṭir:15)

Seclusion With Allāh

Now we'll talk about another *'Ibādah In shā'* Allāh, and this *'Ibādah* also doesn't get talked about enough. It's a way to get closer to Allāh ﷻ with true sincerity and honesty. This *'Ibādah* can lead to forgiveness and many amazing *Ākhirah* benefits and rewards. It's an *'Ibādah* that will strengthen your *Īmān* and it's an *'Ibādah* that will strengthen your bond with Allāh ﷻ. It's an *'Ibādah* that attains you solace for your soul. If you want your worries to dissipate, if you want your burdens to be lifted, if you have wounds that need healing and a heart that needs reassuring, then pay close attention to this essential overlooked *'Ibādah* and try to make this *'Ibādah* a regular part of your day, or try doing it several times a day if you can.

This *'Ibādah* involves setting aside all external distractions to spend time with Allāh ﷻ in *'Ibādah*. This *'Ibādah* is stepping away from all the distractions in your life and devoting time to *'Ibādah* and solitude with Allāh ﷻ at any hour of the day or night. It's retreating to a place of seclusion for the purpose of reflecting on the verses of Allāh ﷻ and dedicating oneself to *'Ibādah*. Solitude in *'Ibādah* fosters sincerity.

When one is alone in *'Ibādah* he perceives and sees nothing but Allāh ﷻ, and if one sees nothing but Allāh ﷻ then he's moved solely by fear and love for Him. Some said those who cherish *'Ibādah* in solitude are clinging to the pillar of sincerity and holding fast to truthfulness. This *'Ibādah* is *Khashyat Allāhi bil-Ghayb*, seclusion with Allāh ﷻ. It's praised by Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ said,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلْغَيْبِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿ ٱلْمُلْك: ١٢﴾

Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen will have forgiveness and great reward. (al-Mulk:12)

Those who fear their Lord in secrecy, they'll be covered with the Shade of Allāh ﷻ when there's no shade but His. In the *Hadīth*, the well-known *Hadīth*, one of the categories of those who will be shaded is

وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ

One who remembers Allāh ﷻ in solitude and his eyes pour with tears.[1]

Khāliyan – To attain this special reward, the Messenger ﷺ specifically said *Khāliyan*, in solitude, in seclusion. This *'Ibādah* is the first *'Ibādah* that Allāh ﷻ inspired to the Messenger ﷺ. Its significance is underscored by the fact that it was inspired to the Messenger ﷺ even before he received revelation, before his messagehood. It was his *'Ibādah* in seclusion in *Ghār Hirā'*, and it's an *'Ibādah* of the other messengers. Mūsā ﷺ,

وَوَٰعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَٰثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتْمَمْنَٰهَا بِعَشْرٍ فَتَمَّ مِيقَٰتُ رَبِّهِۦٓ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً...﴿ ٱلْأَعْرَاف: ١٤٢﴾

And We made an appointment with Mūsā for thirty nights and perfected them by (the addition of) ten; so the term of his Lord was completed as forty nights. (al-ʾAʿrāf:142)

Ibrāhīm ﷺ,

وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَأَدْعُواْ رَبِّى عَسَىٰٓ أَلَّآ أَكُونَ بِدُعَآءِ رَبِّى شَقِيًّا﴿ مَرْيَم: ٤٨﴾

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 660

And I will leave you and those you invoke other than Allāh and will invoke my Lord. I expect that I will not be in invocation to my Lord unhappy (i.e., disappointed). (Maryam:48)

Zakarīyyah ﷺ,

قَالَ رَبِّ ٱجْعَل لِّيٓ ءَايَةً ۚ قَالَ ءَايَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ ٱلنَّاسَ ثَلَٰثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ﴿ مَرْيَم: ١٠ ﴾

He said, "My Lord, make for me a sign." He said, "Your sign is that you will not speak to the people for three nights, despite (being) sound." (Maryam:10)

فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِمْ أَن سَبِّحُوا۟ بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿ مَرْيَم: ١١ ﴾

So he came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signalled to them to exalt (Allāh) in the morning and afternoon. (Maryam:11)

Maryam ﷺ,

...كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزْقًا ۖ قَالَ يَٰمَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَٰذَا...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٧ ﴾

...Every time Zakarīyyah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, "O Maryam, from where is this [coming] to you?... (ʾĀli ʿImrān:37)

The wife of Fir'awn asked for salvation from Fir'awn and his actions, and the only way to achieve that salvation is by seclusion from him.

...رَبِّ ٱبْنِ لِى عِندَكَ بَيْتًا فِى ٱلْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِى مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِۦ وَنَجِّنِى مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ﴿ ٱلتَّحْرِيم: ١١﴾

...My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Fir'awn and his deeds and save me from the wrongdoing people. (at-Taḥrīm:11)

An indication of an individual's *Yaqīn* in Allāh ﷻ is their love for solitude with Him in *'Ibādah*. They worship Allāh ﷻ in solitude as if they see Him. This profound bond represents the greatest level of faith,

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

To worship Allāh as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you.[1]

When you receive an important phone call while you're in a gathering, what do you do? You distance yourself from the distractions in your environment. You might utilize noise-cancelling technology on your earbuds, or you might hold your phone to one year while covering the other ear to minimize the external disruptions that are around you. This allows you to concentrate and organize your thoughts effectively while you're speaking.

Sometimes, you may encounter someone who's so engrossed in a phone conversation that you give him Salām and he doesn't respond. It's as if they're completely absorbed in their own world, they're oblivious to their surroundings. This *'Ibādah* is to retreat to a location away from all worldly distractions to be focused and alone with Allāh ﷻ. A dear individual shared with me that they had an uncle who used to find solace by retreating to his bedroom during the day, performing various acts of *'Ibādah*, and when they went to call him for dinner or other needs, they

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 50

would perceive him so engrossed in his *'Ibādah*, that it seems as though he exists in a different realm. Getting him out of his profound *'Ibādah* was comparable to waking him up from a deep sleep. Working for extended hours, then dedicating time to your family, managing errands, attending meetings, and other significant responsibilities and problems in life can be tiring, they can be exhausting. It's important to carve out some personal time to let your soul rest and to recharge your soul, just like you take breaks to nap and recharge your body. Remember to give your soul that time to relax and to connect with Allāh ﷻ.

Solitude can feel very scary and lonely, except when it's solitude with Allāh ﷻ. Solitude with Allāh ﷻ only brings comfort. Take, for example, *Salāh*. *Salāh* represents the hallmark and symbol of the virtuous '*Ubbād* in their moments of solitude. In Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[1], and similar in meaning in Sahīh Muslim[2], the Messenger ﷺ said,

فَصَلُّوا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ، فَإِنَّ أَفْضَلَ الصَّلَاةِ صَلَاةُ الْمَرْءِ فِي بَيْتِهِ إِلَّا الْمَكْتُوبَةَ

People, perform your Salāh in your homes. The best Salāh of a person is what's performed at his home, except the compulsory Salāh (the Salāh in Jamā'ah).

Salāh in solitude is a *Salāh* that's focused and it's devoid of any showiness.

Similar to *Salāh* is the other various 'Ibadat. Recitation of the *Qur'ān*, the various *Adhkār*, and *Qiyām Al-Layl* fall under this *'Ibādah*. The distinction between this *'Ibādah* and *Qiyām Al-Layl* lies in its scope. *Qiyām Al-Layl* refers to the *'Ibādah* during nighttime. This *'Ibādah* we're talking about encompasses both day and night — and *Qiyām* falls under it — and this *'Ibādah* is in solitude. One of the 'Ibadat that you can do

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 731

[2] Sahih Muslim 781

alone as part of this *'Ibādah* is to reflect and think about Allāh ﷻ's Blessings over you and about His Creations and about His Verses. *Du'ā* is another *'Ibādah* that falls under this *'Ibādah*. *Du'ā* where no one sees or hears you except Allāh ﷻ. And I mentioned in a previous discussion how Ibn Taymiyyah used to seek out a deserted *Masjid* to make *Du'ā* within it. There's no need for any prior appointments or preparations for meeting with Allāh ﷻ, because the Gates of Allāh ﷻ are always open.

You don't have to prepare your words or try to be eloquent with Allāh ﷻ, because along with your verbal recitation of *Du'ā*, your intention about your *Du'ā* and what you mean by it has a voice within it that Allāh ﷻ knows about. This *'Ibādah* is not limited to *Ramadān* or the months or days after it, nor is it confined to any specific time of the day or the night. It can be performed whenever you desire.

Those who have habitually practiced and experienced this *'Ibādah* will share that ease and success will encounter you from ways that you never imagined. Some, if not most, started looking for ways to relieve their suffering or to get support by speaking to others while ignoring Allāh ﷻ Whose gates never close. Some find or seek solace in people who can't help, and they leave turning to Allāh ﷻ Who has power over everything — marriage, wealth, peace of mind, children, problems, stress, sins — Allāh ﷻ has the solution to all and Allāh ﷻ is able to help.

No one is more generous, no one is more merciful, no one is more capable of helping you than Him. If you taste the sweetness of this *'Ibādah*, you will never leave it. Solitude with Allāh ﷻ brings you blessings from ways you never perceived. When Ibrāhīm ﷺ sought solitude with Allāh ﷻ,

فَلَمَّا ٱعْتَزَلَهُمْ...﴿ مَرْيَم: ٤٩﴾

So when he had left them… (Maryam:49)

He received the blessing of Allāh ﷻ, Ishāq and Ya'qūb.

فَلَمَّا ٱعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ إِسْحَـٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿ مَرْيَم: ٤٩﴾

So when he had left them and those they worshipped other than Allāh, We gave him Ishāq and Ya'qūb, and each [of them] We made a prophet. (Maryam:49)

Not only Ishāq and Ya'qūb, but also they were Messengers. When Zakarīyyah noticed the amazing blessings that Allāh ﷻ had given to Maryam ﷺ when she was alone in *'Ibādah*, he asked her,

أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَـٰذَا...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٧﴾

From where is this (coming) to you?... (ʾĀli ʿImrān:37)

Where did you get this from? She got it in the *Mihrāb*.

...كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَـٰمَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَـٰذَا...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٧﴾

...Every time Zakarīyyah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, "O Maryam, from where is this [coming] to you?... (ʾĀli ʿImrān:37)

He made *Du'ā* just like she made *Du'ā*.

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُۥ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِى مِن لَّدُنكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ ٱلدُّعَآءِ﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٨﴾

At that, Zakarīyyah called upon his Lord, saying, "My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of supplication." (ʾĀli ʿImrān:38)

The result for him came while he was in the *Mihrāb* like her.

فَنَادَتْهُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَآئِمٌ يُصَلِّى فِى ٱلْمِحْرَابِ...
﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٩﴾

So the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber... (ʾĀli ʿImrān:39)

The angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the *Mihrāb*, "Allāh ﷻ gives you the glad tidings of Yahyā", while he was standing in the *Mihrāb*. The definition of a *Mihrāb* is our topic. *Mihrāb*,

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٧﴾

Every time Zakarīyyah entered upon her in the prayer chamber... (ʾĀli ʿImrān:37)

فَنَادَتْهُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَآئِمٌ يُصَلِّى فِى ٱلْمِحْرَابِ...
﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ٣٩﴾

So the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber... (ʾĀli ʿImrān:39)

Ibn ʻAshūr said *Mihrāb* is a private room that someone uses to isolate themselves for *ʻIbādah* and *Salāh*. And I said solitude with Allāh ﷻ brings you blessings. Muhammad Ibn Yūsuf said,

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ تَعْجِيلَ النِّعَمِ فَلْيُكْثِرْ مِنْ مُنَاجَاةِ الْخَلْوَةِ

Those who wish to hasten the blessing of Allāh ﷻ should engage in frequent, private Du'ā.[1]

A believer, upon witnessing others transgress the boundaries set by Allāh ﷻ in their privacy, promptly seeks to adhere to *'Ibādah* and obedience to Allāh ﷻ in his solitude, and we spoke about this in the other talks. Finding solitude with Allāh ﷻ brings immense joy, solace, and peace. Those who are not familiar with this form of *'Ibādah* or do not engage in it forfeit the *Jannah* that exists in this *Dunyā*.

[1] Ḥilyat Al-Awliyāʾ wa Ṭabaqāt Al-Aṣfiyāʾ, Ṭ. Maṭbaʿat Al-Saʿādah, 10/402

Surround Yourself with the Pious

In the last few talks, we've been discussing the practical steps that lead to loving Allāh ﷻ. The first factor that we took was learning about Allāh ﷻ and His Qualities and the *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻ. Ibn Al-Qayyim[1] separates those into two aspects: learning about Allāh ﷻ and His Qualities and then learning about the *Ni'am* of Allāh ﷻ as a separate aspect, but we combined them into one because we went over these aspects many times throughout our recent talks.

The second aspect that leads to loving Allāh ﷻ that we covered is having a bond with the word of Allāh, with the *Qur'ān*, the recitation of the *Qur'ān*.

The third, which we will begin on right now *In shā'* Allāh, is being around people who genuinely love Allāh ﷻ, learning from their wise words, and selecting the most profound insights and valuable lessons from their talk.

Ibn Al-Qayyim not only recommended surrounding oneself with such individuals who appear to have genuine love for Allāh ﷻ, but he also emphasized the importance of being selective in the positive teachings that they have to offer. He advised to take the most valuable insights and teachings from their words. It's like entering an orchard filled with the finest fruits, but then you select only the very best fruits among all the good fruits that are in the orchard. If someone genuinely wants to love Allāh ﷻ, their hearts need to connect to and love everything related to Allāh ﷻ. One who loves Allāh ﷻ will feel a strong bond with the Word of Allāh, with the *Qur'ān*, because it's guidance from Allāh and because it's the Word of Allāh ﷻ. They will cherish the Messenger ﷺ, by loving

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/19

him and following him, because he brings them the guidance from Allāh ﷻ and he's sent by Allāh ﷻ and he's most beloved to Allāh ﷻ. They will then also love those who obey Allāh ﷻ's Commands and appear close to Allāh ﷻ. You love them because their apparent actions reflect their closeness to Allāh ﷻ, and that helps bring you closer to Allāh ﷻ, and it helps keep you steadfast.

You'll see individuals who engage in sinful behaviour come together and encourage and support each other in their transgressions and share love for one another in that filthy cause. Athletes, for example, love each other, and they form bonds based on their athletic abilities. Singers and actors cultivate relationships within their shared profession. And likewise, those who love Allāh ﷻ form a bond with each other. That bond helps them attain the love of Allāh ﷻ and to remain steadfast on this difficult path. The gathering of individuals who love Allāh ﷻ to study the *Dīn* of Allāh ﷻ and to remind each other of Allāh ﷻ is an established *'Ibādah*, and it's one of the most powerful ways to nurture love for Allāh ﷻ. In Sahīh Muslim[1],

وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ، يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ

Those who gather in the House of Allāh ﷻ, reciting the Book of Allāh ﷻ and learning and teaching the Qur'ān to each other,

The reward is what?

إِلَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ، وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ، وَحَفَّتْهُمُ المَلَائِكَةُ، وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

[1] Sahih Muslim 2699

Tranquillity will descend upon them, mercy will cover them, the angels will surround them, and Allāh ﷻ *will mention them in the presence of those near Him.*

What do those who love Allāh ﷻ discuss in their gatherings? Their discussions roam around bringing themselves and those around them closer to Allāh ﷻ. Being in the company of virtuous individuals serves as a reminder of the *Ākhirah*, it encourages you to practice *Zuhd* and to detach your heart from this *Dunyā*.

If you make a mistake, those righteous, virtuous brothers will correct you. If you forget or you lose focus, they're there to remind you. If you're neglectful and not thinking about Allāh ﷻ, they'll remind you to focus on Him. If you exhibit arrogance, they'll show you the importance of being humble. If you have show-off, they'll guide you towards sincerity, they'll offer you advice and help you clear and purify your intentions. If there are doubts, they'll help dispel the doubts, they'll help transform those doubts into certainty. They'll motivate you into seeking righteousness and steering clear away from sins and misguidance.

Spending time with those who appear to love Allāh ﷻ and loving them for the sake of Allāh ﷻ is a manifestation of sincere faith. It serves as a protective barrier for your *Īmān*; it protects your heart, it strengthens your faith, and it helps prevent any relapse in your *Dīn.* If the only benefit of loving your brothers and being around them for the sake of Allāh ﷻ is being shaded under the Throne of Allāh ﷻ on a day when no other shade exists, that would be more than enough blessing for that *'Ibādah*. Allāh ﷻ says in the *Hadīth Al-Qudsi*[1],

[1] Sahih Muslim 2566

إنّ الله تَعَالَى يَقُول يَوْمَ القِيَامَةِ :أيْنَ المُتَحَابُّونَ بِجَلالِي؟ اليَوْمَ أُظِلُّهُمْ فِي ظِلِّي يَوْمَ لاَ ظِلَّ إلاَّ ظِلِّي

Where are those who have mutual love for the sake of My Glory? Today, I shall shelter them in My Shade when there will be no shade except Mine.

In another *Hadīth Qudsi*, in Muwattā' Mālik[1] and Musnad Ahmad[2], Allāh ﷻ says,

وَجَبَتْ مَحَبَّتِي لِلْمُتَحَابِّينَ فِيَّ، وَالْمُتَجَالِسِينَ فِيَّ وَالْمُتَزَاوِرِينَ فِيَّ وَالْمُتَبَاذِلِينَ

My love is obliged for those who love each other for My sake, and those who sit with each other for My sake, and those who visit each other for My sake, and those who give to each other generously for My sake.

Companionship has a significant impact on an individual. In Sunan Abu Dāwūd[3], the Messenger ﷺ said,

الرجل عَلىَ دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ

A man follows the religion of his friend, so each one of you should consider whom he chooses as a friend.

When one associates with individuals who are dedicated to cultivating a love for Allāh ﷻ, he's most likely going to develop a similar affection for Allāh ﷻ himself. A memory comes to mind of a brother who, some time ago, while I was under severe restriction, he journeyed halfway across the world to come see me. Upon arriving in the United States, he

[1] Al-Muwaṭṭaʾ li Mālik, Ṭ. Dār Iḥyāʾ Al-Turāth Al-ʿArabī, 2/953, Book 51, Ḥadīth no. 16

[2] Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭ. Al-Risālah, 36/359-60, ḥadīth no. 22030

[3] Sunan Abi Dawud 4833

found himself approximately ten hours or so away, and he was determined to meet me for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, undertaking the considerable distance in the United States by car. We spend a few moments together. We engaged in a conversation about *Ahādīth*, and we didn't go beyond some *Ahādīth*, and I mentioned a *Hadīth*. I expressed to him, first of all, my *Du'ā* that Allāh ﷻ would bestow His Love upon him. Then I mentioned a *Hadīth* to him narrated by Abu Hurayrah ﷺ that the Messenger ﷺ said, "A man visited a brother of his in a village, so Allāh sent an angel to wait for him on the road. The angel asked, 'Where are you going?' The man responded, he said, 'I'm going to visit a brother of mine in this village.' The angel said, 'Does he have a favour over you? Do you owe him something? Is that why you're visiting him?' He said, 'No, I just love him for the sake of Allāh ﷻ.' The angel said,

فَإِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَبَّكَ كَمَا أَحْبَبْتَهُ فِيهِ

'I am a Messenger of Allāh ﷻ to inform you that Allāh ﷻ loves you as you love him for His sake."[1]

It's possible for a believer to enter *Jahannam wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh* due to shortcomings, yet Allāh ﷻ may accept the *Shafā'ah* of righteous friends he had in this *Dunyā*, and with their *Shafā'ah* that Allāh ﷻ accepts, he will be saved from *Jahannam*. In Sunan Ibn Mājah[2], the Messenger ﷺ said when Allāh ﷻ saves the believers from *Jahannam*, those believers who were saved will ask about other brothers in faith that they missed — they don't see them, they entered *Jahannam*. They'll seek *Shafā'ah* for them. They'll say, "Yā *Allāh*! They're our brothers. We used to perform *Salāh* together, we fasted together, we performed *Hajj* together, and now they're admitted into *Jahannam*." And Allāh ﷻ will

[1] Sahih Muslim 2567

[2] Sunan Ibn Majah 60

say, "Go bring forth those whom you recognize among them", and they will. Having brothers who you love for the sake of Allāh ﷻ is a grace and blessing. Allāh ﷻ called it a *Ni'mah*.

...وَٱذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَآءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ
قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِۦٓ إِخْوَٰنًا...﴿ آلِ عِمْرَان: ١٠٣﴾

And remember the favour of Allāh upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favour, brothers. (ʾĀli ʿImrān:103)

Bini'matihi ikhwanan. 'Umar[1] ﷺ stated that there were three matters, if not for them, he would have no desire to continue living, and one of those matters is being surrounded with righteous brothers. If establishing brotherhood and sisterhood with the righteous who love Allāh ﷻ is commendable to this extent, then consider the value of being in the company of *Ulamā'* who apply their knowledge and put it into practice.

Personally observing a role model has a more profound impact on the self than merely hearing or reading about them. It leaves a lasting impression of goodness on the observer. Those who take knowledge from righteous *Ulamā'* act and think differently than those who took it from PDFs. The *Sahābah* were very fortunate in this regard. They had the opportunity to sit with the Messenger ﷺ, and they had the opportunity to witness his actions. They were in close proximity to him. What was the result? They held a profound love for Allāh ﷻ that transcended verbal expression. They became the finest nation ever established for the benefit of humanity, following the example set for them by RasūlAllāh ﷺ.

The deficiency in spirituality, the absence of love for Allāh ﷻ in the hearts of many, and the lack of proper manners and knowledge that's widespread these days can be attributed, to a certain degree, to the

[1] Kitāb Al-Jihād by Ibn Al-Mubārak, Ṭ. Al-Dār Al-Tūnisiyyah, 1/167

superficial acquisition of knowledge through digital means and written materials. The situation gets worse by individuals who present themselves as students of knowledge or followers of the pure *Manhaj* while exploiting that status for their own filthy, personal benefits. They lack connection or respect to the *Ulamā'*, even the *Ulamā'* of the *Haqq*.

The companionship of righteous *Ulamā'*, students of *'Ilm*, and sincere brothers acts as a constant reminder of Allāh ﷻ. You experience a profound sense of love, comfort, tranquillity, and serenity in their presence because their gatherings are centred around Allāh ﷻ. You see their love for Allāh ﷻ in their demeanour, in their appearance, in their humility, in their speech, in their attentiveness, in their movements, and even in their silence — in all aspects of their lives. Their presence reminds you of the love of Allāh ﷻ.

The inspiration derived from such individuals when they're nearby fosters love for Allāh ﷻ within oneself. If the heart is filled with the brightness of loving Allāh ﷻ, it shines on the faces. That's why they're blessed with radiant faces. A heart filled with the love of Allāh ﷻ nourishes the face with brightness. They asked Al-Hasan Al-Basri about those who do *Qiyām Al-Layl*. They said, "What's the reason that those who perform *Qiyām Al-Layl* at night have beautiful, radiant faces?" Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "They secluded themselves with Allāh ﷻ so Allāh ﷻ adorned them with a light from His."[1] The *Nūr* of the love of Allāh ﷻ that's in the heart manifests in the faces.

When the heart finds the love of Allāh ﷻ, it's illuminated, and it affects the face. The faces become radiant with what has entered the hearts. When you're around such faces, you're constantly reminded of the love of Allāh ﷻ. Yes, Allāh blesses those whom He loves and those who love Him with radiant faces, but it's not just about appearance; it's mainly

[1] Faḍl Qiyām Al-Layl wa at-Tahajjud by Al-Ājurri, Ṭ. Dār Al-Khuḍayrī, 1/92

about their discussions and their reminders that remind you about Allāh ﷻ. Some used to say when they visited Al-Hasan Al-Basri, "We would leave from our gathering with him as though we regarded this whole *Dunyā* as something insignificant" [1] because their entire discussion cantered around Allāh ﷻ. Some of the *Salaf* used to visit pious servants and *Ulamā'* to observe their demeanour and their conduct and not just to acquire knowledge from them. Why? Because the essence of knowledge is reflected in one's demeanour, conduct, behaviour, and in his character.

In Manāqib Al-Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal[2], Ibn Al- Jawzi related that in Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal's *Halaqāt*, there were approximately five thousand students or more. Less than five hundred were writing, the rest were observing, the rest were learning by observing his manners and his proper behaviour. The lives of some of the *Ulamā'* who lived over a millennium ago still resonate with us today. Their teachings and lifestyles that they exemplify still enhance our love for Allāh ﷻ. One can only imagine the profound impact on those who had the privilege of sitting in their company.

'Ubaydillāh Ibn 'Abdillāh Ibn 'Utbah Ibn Mas'ūd Al-Hudali was a *Tābi'ī* who was a teacher of 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz. 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz said, "For me to be in the company of 'Ubaydillāh is more precious to me than the entire world and what's in it." In another statement, he said, "By Allāh, I would spend a thousand *Dīnār* from *Bayt Al-Māl* to spend a night or some time with 'Ubaydillāh."[3] What could have prompted the great *Khalīfah*, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz, who was renowned for his *Zuhd* and his diligence in avoiding any personal gain from *Bayt Al-Māl* to make such a statement? When he assumed leadership, when he became the leader, he informed his wife about his new role. He said, "I've become the leader of the Muslims. If you desire

[1] Ḥilyat Al-Awliyāʾ wa Ṭabaqāt Al-Aṣfiyāʾ, Ṭ. Maṭbaʿat as-Saʿādah, 2/158

[2] Manāqib Al-Imām Aḥmad, Ṭ. Dār Hajr, 1/288

[3] Wafayāt Al-Aʿyān, Ṭ. Dār Ṣādir, 3/115

Allāh and the Afterlife, contribute all your gold and jewellery to the treasury of the Muslims, or go back to your family's house."[1] Fātimah, his wife, willingly donated all her possessions to *Bayt Al-Māl*. He wanted to set an example by starting with himself.

One time, he visited *Bayt Al-Māl*, the treasury of the Muslims, and he smelt a pleasant fragrance. He closed his nose! He said, "The benefit of fragrance is enjoying the smell of it, and it doesn't belong to me, so I can't benefit from it."[2] He feared that Allāh ﷻ on *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah* would question him about why he inhaled the fragrance of what belongs to the Muslims in *Bayt Al-Māl Al-Muslimīn*. His stories on *Zuhd* are remarkable, but now he's willing to pay a thousand *Dīnār* from *Bayt Al-Māl* to sit with a *Tābi'ī* scholar named 'Ubaydillāh. Why? Because he'll remind him about Allāh ﷻ and the importance of loving Allāh ﷻ and that'll bring numerous benefits to 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz personally as well as to the *Ummah* in various ways.

The summary and essence if this talk and this concept that guides towards the love of Allāh ﷻ is the importance of associating with individuals who appear to possess genuine love for Allāh ﷻ. By spending time in their company, one can strengthen his love for Allāh ﷻ. By surrounding oneself with those who appear to truly love Allāh ﷻ, one can glean the most valuable knowledge, wisdom, and actions that contribute to cultivating a deeper love for Allāh ﷻ.

The second half of Ibn Al-Qayyim's statement on this same aspect is what we'll cover next *In shā'* Allāh, and that is: when you're in gatherings, you're going to speak, therefore, he emphasized the importance of speaking only when your contributions will be beneficial to both yourself and others.

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[1] Ḥilyat Al-Awliyāʾ wa Ṭabaqāt Al-Aṣfiyāʾ, Ṭ. Maṭbaʿat as-Saʿādah, 5/283

[2] Ibid., 5/326

Speak Only When There Is Benefit

In the last talk, we mentioned that Ibn Al-Qayyim[1] said that you attain love for Allāh ﷻ by being around people who appear to be righteous, people who genuinely love Allāh ﷻ and remind one about Allāh ﷻ. He advised to be around them, and he encouraged taking the best lessons from all the valuable lessons they have to offer.

Within the same context, Ibn Al-Qayyim underscored the significance of communicating only when one's talk is advantageous to both oneself and to others. Being with people who appear to be good clearly develops love of Allāh ﷻ — we took that point, we understood it. But how does only speaking when your words benefit you and the others relate to this topic about attaining love for Allāh ﷻ?

First of all, Ibn Al-Qayyim, in this point or aspect, advised about being around people who genuinely love Allāh ﷻ and to learn from them. Being silent and listening are essential learning. Also, in these gatherings that Ibn Al-Qayyim advised about, individuals engage in conversations, and even those who are considered virtuous may get caught up in their conversations and may say that which they shouldn't. The objective of participating in these gatherings is to seek love for Allāh ﷻ. That necessitates that one speaks only that which is beneficial for oneself and for others. He first mentioned the importance of being selective about what to listen to. Now, he's suggesting that you should also be careful about what you say.

Another point as to how it relates to this topic is that sinful and vain talk can distance one from Allāh ﷻ, and the purpose of all this is to attain love for Allāh ﷻ. Ibn Abi *Dunyā* related that Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ said,

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/19

الصَّمْتُ وَهُوَ أَوَّلُ الْعِبَادَةِ

Silence is the first step to 'Ibādah.[1]

And another wisdom, and it's probably the most significant reason that Ibn Al-Qayyim cautioned against careless use of words, is that Ibn Al-Qayyim, along with other *Ulamā'*, emphasized that practicing silence and being mindful of one's speech can foster and lead to love of Allāh ﷻ.

To protect your *Dīn* and to attain nearness to Allāh ﷻ, the tongue must be controlled in a manner akin to a sword being sheathed. Just as one secures a sword to prevent its sharp edge from causing injury, so too must one manage their speech and their tongue to avoid inflicting harm on themselves and others, and most importantly to avoid distancing themselves from Allāh ﷻ. Getting involved in negative, *Harām*, and vain talk is risky.

Being silent can bring peace to one's *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. That's why silence is so valuable. The tongue can be sharper than the sword. It possesses the capacity to cause significant damage, even more than a sword does. It can cause the downfall of a person who loosely wields it. It can create a distance between that individual and the love of Allāh ﷻ. A loose tongue is like a rope in the hands of the *Shaytān*. When you stay silent, you don't speak, you cut that rope and you free yourself to continue on the path to loving Allāh ﷻ. When you start talking, the *Shaytān* can lead you with that rope wherever he wants, whenever he wants. If an individual is unable to regulate his speech, their mouth becomes a gateway for trash. That gateway leads to the heart, and that transforms the heart into a receptacle for waste. That will obstruct the path to attaining closeness to Allāh ﷻ, and it will have an effect on one's *'Ibādah*.

Being conscious of your words positively influences your acts of *'Ibādah*. A wise person who knows what happens in the *Ākhirah* and the

[1] Aṣ-Ṣamt li Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 1/262

weight of each word that he utters, that person will think carefully about what he says before he speaks, and he'll realize how important it is to control every word he says. If a person were to exercise control over their speech, they'd avoid many pitfalls. Like a wise person once said, "Words are like medicine. A little bit of it can help, but too much of it can be harmful." You don't want to overdose on talking, and it's all summarized in the short, comprehensive words of RasūlAllāh ﷺ in Sahīh Al-Bukhāri[1],

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

He who believes in Allāh and the Last Day must speak good or remain silent.

Silence, except when it's beneficial to speak, was a characteristic of the Messenger ﷺ and the *Salaf*, and it's a trait of the wise thinkers. Jābir Ibn Samurah described the Messenger ﷺ as

كَانَ طَوِيلَ الصَّمْتِ

He was characterized by prolonged silence.[2]

Allāh ﷻ reminded us to embrace silence except when it's beneficial, and He did so by reminding us that we will be held accountable for every word we utter.

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ﴿ ق: ١٨﴾

He (i.e., man) utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared (to record). (Qāf:18)

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 6018

[2] As-Sunan Al-Kubrā li Al-Bayhaqī, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 10/406; Ṭ. Markaz Hajr, 21/200

When you say something, always be ready to have an explanation for what you said when you stand before Allāh ﷻ. Prior to every word, prior to every statement, remind yourself of the Day where you'll stand before Allāh ﷻ. Remind yourself that you will be asked, "Why did you say such a thing?" And be ready to offer an explanation for every word you uttered when you stand before Allāh ﷻ.

Al-Fudayl Ibn 'Iyyād mentioned that some of his companions spoke so little that he could memorize their words from one Friday to the next[1], because excessive talk can lead to a person getting carried away in his talk and it increases the likelihood of accidentally expressing thoughts that may be considered *Harām*, like lying, gossiping, backbiting, disparaging, or slandering others. Getting carried away in talking comes from the *Nafs* and the *Shaytān*.

Once someone habitually starts engaging in these behaviours, it becomes addictive, and then it becomes tough to control what one says, and that leads to one's destruction. Some gossiping in some gatherings may provide a momentary sense of satisfaction, but it'll carry a significant impact when one stands before Allāh ﷻ.

Ibrāhīm At-Taymi said that someone who was a friend of Ar- Rabī' Ibn Khuthaym stated that, "For the twenty years I was with Ar-Rabī' Ibn Khuthaym, I never heard him say one negative word."[2] Khārijah Ibn Mu'sab said something similar about Ibn 'Awn[3]. Talhah Ibn 'Ubaydillāh Al-Baghdādi said, "I happened to be on a ship with Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal." He said he'd remain silent, and when he spoke during the journey, he'd say,

اللَّهُمَّ أَمِتْنَا عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَالسُّنَّةِ

[1] As-Ṣamt li Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 1/223

[2] Az-Zuhd li Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/273

[3] Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ, Ṭ. Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 6/366

Yā Allāh! Let us die upon Islām and the Sunnah.[1]

Al-Hasan Al-Basri[2] said the wise person's speech is guided by their heart. When they wish to express something, they'll reflect upon their heart first. They'll think first, and if the sentiment is positive, they'll speak, and if it's negative, they'll remain silent. Meaning, a wise person thinks before he speaks. The ignorant individual, on the other hand, allows their heart to be at the mercy of their tongue. They speak whatever comes to mind without thinking about it.

Now, being silent from forbidding the evil, ordaining the good, teaching knowledge, doing *Dhikr*, or reciting the *Qur'ān* is, of course, not the commanded type of silence. The *Wājib* type of silence is when the talk falls under what's *Harām* or what may lead to *Harām*. Some *Mubāh* talk has no purpose, it's better that one remains silent and doesn't engage in it. And keep in mind that the scope of this topic encompasses what has become prevalent on social media platforms.

In the past, communication was restricted to face-to-face and in-person interactions. However, individuals can now engage in discussions at any time of the day or night through live broadcasts or typed messages, it can even be from the comfort of their bedrooms and cars. You notice some who engage in live broadcasts for extended periods, and one wonders before anything, how does anyone have that much time to waste? And also, during lengthy discussions, numerous verbal missteps tend to occur. Some *Juhhāl* issue more *Fatwās* per night than some of the esteemed Imāms of previous generations have done in years. Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah said,

أَجْسَرُ النَّاسِ عَلَى الْفُتْيَا أَقَلُّهُمْ عِلْمًا

[1] Manāqib Al-Imām Aḥmad, li Ibn Al-Jawzī, Ṭ. Dār Hajr, 1/396

[2] Az-Zuhd, li Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/220

The individuals who are most audacious in issuing Fatwās are the ones with the least knowledge.[1]

They bring issues, they discuss them, they analyse them, they issue decisions and Fatwas, and many times, it's founded on ignorance and slander of others. They analyse current events that seem to be important at that moment, but those current events get quickly forgotten in a day or two, or in a week or two, or in a few months. The current events fade away and become history, and all that remains are just words that one utters, words that they will be asked about before Allāh ﷻ. Don't think you have to speak about every single issue that comes up. You don't have to speak about every *Mas'alah* and current event that arises. Mālik said, "It's a shame and an embarrassment for an Ālim to respond to every question he's asked about."[2]

'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said anyone who provides answers to every question posed to them by others is foolish.[3] We all know the statements and the many examples of some of the greatest *Ulamā'* of all times who used to admit they didn't know when asked about something and how they encouraged others to do the same. Don't get that wrong. Many, if not most of them, were not clueless about the topic that they said "we don't know" about. In most cases, they actually had many opinions and plenty of evidence on that issue they said they didn't know about. Some mentioned that they had studied eight different opinions from various, different *Ulamā'* with plenty of evidence on the issue that they said "we don't know" when asked about it. They chose to say they didn't know because they wanted to be sure and analyse the proofs and opinions before giving an answer.

A word loosely tossed around can cost one his *Ākhirah*. *Wallāhi*, it's not worth giving your deeds to someone you hate or taking the sins of

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[1] Jāmiʿ Bayān Al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlihi, li Ibn ʿAbd Al-Barr, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Al-Jawzī, 2/816

[2] Al-Faqīh wa Al-Mutafaqqih, li Al-Khaṭīb Al-Baghdādī, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Al-Jawzī, 2/418

[3] Jāmiʿ Bayān Al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlihi, li Ibn ʿAbd Al-Barr, Ṭ. Dār Ibn Al-Jawzī, 2/1124

that person who you hate. If just calling someone short can have the big impact of polluting the sea if it were mixed in it, then consider the implications for those who casually accuse others in their *Dīn* and those who spend their days and nights mocking and labelling both the living and the dead as *Khawārij*.

What's said on social media nowadays is more dangerous than the face-to-face interactions of the past. If one word between two people can have the impact of polluting the sea if it was mixed in it, then imagine the impact when it's put on social media for millions to read for decades or possibly even centuries to come. If the heads of the Jews of the Qiblah taught you to call someone whose soul is, *In shā'* Allāh, suspended from the *'Arsh* of Allāh ﷻ — if they taught you to call him a *Khāriji*, or someone who Allāh ﷻ granted acceptance who's in prison or free — rest assured, your words will not harm him. You actually benefit him by what you say. You only harm yourself with that slander. Reflect on the oceans of reward taken from those who slander or the oceans of sins piled upon them for a simple word. This includes everything — in written posts and videos, to audios and messages — it's all included in this topic, and all that distances one from the love of Allāh ﷻ.

So the summary of this talk, I'll present it in a way everyone can understand. When someone gets arrested in this country — may Allāh ﷻ save you all from the oppression of the *Kuffār* and may Allāh ﷻ save you all from falling under their control — when someone's arrested, the first thing an attorney advises his client is to remain silent, not to say anything. No matter what questions they face, they're told to remain silent. No matter how innocent they are, they're told to remain silent. In fact, the officers are required to inform the person they arrest about this, they're told to inform them under the Miranda rights to remain silent, because speaking usually more problems. Even if the person is actually innocent. It's best to remain silent. So if you want peace for your *Ākhirah* and you want to attain love for Allāh ﷻ, then remain silent unless you're sure it's beneficial to you and others.

لَّا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَىٰهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَٰحٍۭ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ...﴿ ٱلنِّسَاء: ١١٤﴾

No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people... (an-Nisāʾ:114)

Thinking carefully about what you say will protect you from the consequences of your words when you have to answer to Allāh ﷻ on *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah*, and thinking about your words carefully will allow you to focus on attaining your love for Allāh ﷻ. We'll conclude with this.

Safeguard Your Heart

The next aspect to cultivate love for Allāh ﷻ that Ibn Al-Qayyim[1] mentioned is safeguarding the heart from anything that obstructs its connection with Allāh ﷻ. To love Allāh ﷻ, you must distance your heart from anything that creates a barrier between the heart and Allāh ﷻ. You need to have a clean, pure heart in order to love Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, it's important to protect your heart from all harm, from flaws, from corruption, and anything that goes against what Allāh ﷻ loves. You steer clear of anything that can damage your heart and push you away from Allāh ﷻ.

Understand the issues you face. Diagnose your heart ailments so you can heal them, and consider it *Tawfīq* from Allāh ﷻ that you're diagnosing your heart, that you know your heart ailments, and that you're working on them. A diseased heart distances one from loving Allāh ﷻ, and it ruins one's *Dunyā* and *Ākhirah*. The Messenger ﷺ, the purest heart to ever beat, used to ask Allāh ﷻ for a sound heart. He used to say,

وَأَسْأَلُكَ قَلْبًا سَلِيمًا

And I ask You for a sound heart.[2]

Allāh ﷻ said,

يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ﴿ ٱلشُّعَرَاء : ٨٨﴾

[1] Madārij as-Sālikīn, li Ibn Al-Qayyim, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 3/382; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī, 3/19

[2] Sunan an-Nasa'i 1304

The Day when there will not benefit (anyone) wealth or children. (aš-Šuʿarāʾ:88)

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى ٱللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴿ ٱلشُّعَرَاء : ٨٩﴾

But only one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart. (aš-Šuʿarāʾ:89)

When the importance of the heart is mentioned, some tend to think that deeds have nothing to do with *'Ibādah* or they diminish their importance. Some go to the extent of saying, "All that matters is what's in my heart", and that's absolutely wrong, as we know. If one truly had *Īmān*, the love of Allāh ﷻ, and love of the Messenger ﷺ in his heart, it would show in one's deeds and actions, like the *Hadīth* in Sahīh Muslim[1],

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُوَرِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ

Allah does not look at your forms or your wealth, rather He looks at your deeds…

Allāh ﷻ looks to your hearts and deeds. We emphasize the heart because it's significant. It represents the place where belief, *Tawhīd*, and intention reside. Having a pure intention is important for deeds, otherwise, a person might end up among those whose deeds lead them to *Jahannam*, *wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh*. There's a *Hadīth* in Sahīh Muslim[2] that mentions the first three groups of people that will be judged, and one of them is someone who was seen as a martyr; he actually sacrificed his life, but the intention was not right. Another is someone who studied and taught, what's referred to as a *"*Shaykh*"* nowadays. The intention wasn't right. The last one is one who gave in charity, but the intention wasn't right, so the result was they were dragged on their faces into *Jahannam*

[1] Sahih Muslim 2564c

[2] Ibid. 1905

wa-al-'iyādh bi-llāh. It's what appeared to be a deed that caused them entry into *Jahannam* because of a wrong intention.

The heart plays a crucial role. Its health influences the overall welbeing of deeds.

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ ، ألا وَهِيَ القَلْبُ

There's a piece of flesh in the body. If it's healthy, the entire body is healthy, if it's corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. It is the heart.[1]

The heart is the foundation of our actions, so it needs to be protected. Our deeds are the result of what's in the heart. In addition to the intention residing in the heart, *Tawhīd*, as I said, also resides in the heart. It's deeply rooted in the heart, but it shows in one's deeds and actions. That's why we put a lot of emphasis on maintaining pure *Tawhīd*. The stronger, the sounder, and the purer the *Tawhīd* is in the hearts, the more steadfast, the more consistent, and the more sincere the actions will be. Actions that help us attain love for Allāh ﷻ.

In order to have a pure heart, it's essential to sweeten the heart with certain matters while purging it of others. In order to maintain and attain a sound heart, always recognize that Allāh ﷻ is the Truth. Always remind your heart of that. Always remind your heart that the day of Judgement, *Yawm Al-Qiyāmah*, is certain to come. Always remind your heart that you and everyone else will be resurrected from your graves and you will stand before Allāh ﷻ. The afflictions of the heart start to manifest when the heart is oblivious to those facts and realities. A heart that knows Allāh ﷻ and a heart that focuses on the *Ākhirah* will not be a diseased heart. Keep in mind that sins, *Shahawāt* (desires), and *Shubuhāt* (which are doubts) — those two are the biggest destroyers of the heart. They distance one

[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 52

from loving Allāh ﷻ. Ibn Al-Mubarāk or possibly Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham, or possibly both of them, said,

رَأَيْتُ الذُّنُوبَ تُمِيتُ الْقُلُوبَ ، وَيُتْبِعُهَا الذُّلَّ إِدْمَانُهَا
وَتَرْكُ الذُّنُوبِ حَيَاةُ الْقُلُوبِ ، وَالْخَيْرُ لِلنَّفْسِ عِصْيَانهَا

Sins lead to the death of the heart,
and persistence on sins is followed by humiliation.
Abandoning sins is essential for a lively, healthy heart,
and resisting the Nafs and the sins is beneficial for the soul.[1]

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ said, "The heart is like the king, and the body parts are like the soldiers. When the king is good, his soldiers are also good. When the heart is corrupt, his soldiers become corrupt as well."[2] The limbs, the actions, and the deeds become corrupt as well.

Sins and doubts are wounds to the heart, and some of those wounds can kill. They create a thick barrier that blocks one from guidance, from goodness, and from loving Allāh ﷻ. To discourage someone from smoking, what do they usually do? They'll bring a picture of a heart and lungs, or they'll actually show them a heart and lungs that have been harmed and damaged by smoking. That way, they can really understand the impact smoking has on their body. If a sinner was able to see the black spots on the heart from the effect of his sins, he would know that there's no illness worse than sins. Sins upon sins continue to weaken the heart until they eventually kill it.

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً نُكِتَتْ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءُ

[1] Dhamm Qaswat Al-Qalb, li Ibn Rajab Al-Ḥanbalī, Ṭ. Al-Fārūq Al-Ḥadīthah, 1/263

[2] Shuʿab Al-Īmān, li Abī Bakr Al-Bayhaqī, Ṭ. Maktabat Al-Rushd, 1/257; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/133

Verily, when the slave (of Allāh) commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart.[1]

When someone experiences even a little bit of pain, they quickly go to the doctor. However, not many people think about the impact of sins or doubts on their hearts and how they darken it. Black spots on the heart from sins weaken a person's journey towards loving Allāh ﷻ. They may even become a barrier; they may cause that person to stumble on the path of loving Allāh ﷻ or to hinder it or to halt it completely. Sometimes, the black spots on the heart can be so extensive that they may even turn one away from the path of Allāh ﷻ completely. That's disastrous. Failing to purify the heart and freeing it from what obstructs its connection from Allāh ﷻ will cause you to drift away from Allāh ﷻ, making it tough to get back on the path of loving Allāh ﷻ.

The sister disease of sins of desires is *Shubuhāt*, doubts. Both lead to the violation of the limbs, and both distance one from loving Allāh ﷻ. The hearts are fragile, and *Shubuhāt* are deceiving. That's why Ibn Taymiyyah[2] advised his student Ibn Al-Qayyim not to allow his heart to absorb doubts like a sponge. He told him to treat his heart like a solid glass bottle. How so? A solid glass bottle, you see through it. You let the doubts pass over the surface of the glass without settling in. If one's not alert, the heart will absorb the doubts that come its way, and the heart will become a sanctuary of nothing but doubts. Instead of *Yaqīn* in the hearts, as it should be, now it's all doubts.

The *Qur'ān* is the best cure to both the *Shubuhāt* and the *Shahawāt* and other ailments as well. The undeniable proofs in the *Qur'ān* distinguish the truth from falsehood, and it eliminates *Shubuhāt* that can corrupt the hearts. The *Qur'ān* allows the people to see things as they

[1] Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3334

[2] Miftāḥ Dār Al-Saʿādah, Ṭ. Dār ʿAṭāʾāt Al-ʿIlm, 1/395; Ṭ. Dār Al-Kutub Al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1/140.

truly are. The *Qur'ān* heals and cures the disease of desires and the disease of doubts. The *Qur'ān* offers wisdom and advice. There are encouragements and there are warnings, *Targhīb* and *Tarhīb*. The *Qur'ān* urges people to focus less on worldly matters and more on the *Ākhirah*. The stories and parables of the *Qur'ān* are a valuable lesson that inspires a healthy heart by teaching what benefits one in *Dunyā* and in *Ākhirah*. The stories and parables of the *Qur'ān* help one turn away from everything harmful, and it leads one to a pure heart that loves Allāh ﷻ and what's right and dislikes what's wrong.

The bottom line is in order to love Allāh ﷻ, you must work on a pure heart that distances your heart from anything that creates a barrier between the heart and Allāh ﷻ. And I'll conclude with a statement by Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Taymiyyah, on this matter, said, "Loving Allāh ﷻ and filling the heart with the love of Allāh ﷻ is the mightiest path to a sound, pure heart."[1]

Walā' and *Barā'*, loving what Allāh ﷻ loves and hating what Allāh ﷻ hates. With that statement, you'll come to the conclusion that loving Allāh ﷻ and purifying the heart are two aspects that nurture one another. It's similar to what I said about *Nawāfil*. It's like a reciprocal relationship in which each one bolsters and improves the other. The more a person fills his heart with love for Allāh ﷻ, the purer their heart will be. The more one purifies his heart and works on it, the more the love for Allāh ﷻ increases. Hearts are like glass containers. As long as they're filled with water, air cannot enter in them because the space is occupied. They need to be filled with *Īmān*, *Yaqīn*, and *Qur'ān*.

[1] Al-ʿUbūdiyyah, T. Al-Maktab Al-Islāmī, 1/97 (Similar in meaning; exact quote not found)

Glossary

Transliteration	Arabic	Meaning
‘Abd	عبد	Servant or slave (of Allāh)
‘Ashūrā	عاشوراء	10th of Muḥarram
‘Aqīdah	العقيدة	Islamic creed or belief system
‘Ijāzah	إجازة	Certification of scholarly transmission
‘Ilm	علم	Knowledge
‘Imāmah	عمامة	Turban; Traditional head covering
‘Ujb	عجب	Self-admiration or conceit
Ākhirah	الآخرة	The Hereafter
Āyah	آية	Verse of Qur’ān
Āyāt	آيات	Plural of Āyah
Adhān	الأذان	Call to prayer
Adhkār	الأذكار	Plural of Dhikr
Ad’iyah	أدعية	Plural of Du‘ā
Ahādīth	أحاديث	Plural of Ḥadīth
Ajzā’	أجزاء	Parts of the Qur’ān
Ajr	أجر	Reward
Al-‘Alīm	العليم	The All-Knowing (Name of Allāh)
Al-‘Azīz	العزيز	Almighty, All-Powerful (Name of Allāh)
Al-‘Arsh	العرش	The Throne of Allāh

Al-'Ubūdiyyah	العبودية	Deep servitude/worship to Allāh
Al-Batūl	البتول	The Chaste (title of Maryam)
Al-Faqīh	الفقيه	Jurist in Islamic law
Al-Hāfidh	الحافظ	The Preserver (Name of Allāh)
Al-Hakīm	الحكيم	The All-Wise (Name of Allāh)
Al-ḥamdu li-llāh	الحمد لله	All praise is due to Allāh
Al-Hanīfiyyah	الحنيفية	True Monotheism (Inclining away from shirk)
Al-Infisāl	الانفصال	Disconnection, detachment
Al-Ittiṣāl	الاتصال	Connection, Connectedness
Al-Jalīl	الجليل	The Majestic (Name of Allāh)
Al-Karīm	الكريم	The Generous (Name of Allāh)
Al-Latīf	اللطيف	The Subtle, Kind (Name of Allāh)
Al-Mālik	المالك	The Master (Name of Allāh)
Al-Mahbūbūn	المحبوبون	The beloved ones (of Allāh)
Al-Muqsit	المقسط	The Just One (Name of Allāh)
Al-Muzzammil	المزمل	The Enshrouded One (title of Prophet ﷺ)
Al-Ra'ūf	الرؤوف	The Compassionate (Name of Allāh)
Al-Uṣūl ath-Thalātha	الأصول الثلاثة	The Three Fundamental Principles
Al-Wakeel	الوكيل	The Trustee, The Disposer of Affairs (Name of Allāh)
Allāhu Akbar	الله أكبر	Allāh is the Greatest

Allāhumma bārik lahu	اللهم بارك له	O Allāh, bless him
Arafah	عرفة	Day of ‘Arafah (9th Dhū’l-Ḥijjah)
As-Sabīl	السبيل	The Path
As-Samad	الصمد	The Eternal, Satisfier of Needs (Name of Allāh)
Ash-Shakūr	الشكور	The Most Appreciative (Name of Allāh)
Astaghfiru Allāha al-ʾAẓīm	أستغفر الله العظيم	I seek forgiveness from Allāh, the Mighty
Awliyā’	أولياء	Close friends of Allāh, righteous allies
Azhad An-Nās	أزهد الناس	Most ascetic of people; Referring to Rasūallāh ﷺ
Bani Isrā’īl	بني إسرائيل	The Children of Israel
Barā’	البراء	Disavowal
Barakah	بركة	Blessing
Barzakh	برزخ	Intermediate realm after death
Bayt al-Māl	بيت المال	Islamic public treasury
Da’wah	الدعوة	Call to Islam
Dhihār	ظهار	Pre-Islamic form of divorce
Dhikr	الذكر	Remembrance of Allāh
Dhul	الذل	Humility, submissiveness
Dīn	الدين	Religion
Dīnār	دينار	Gold coin
Dirham	درهم	Silver coin
Dunyā	الدنيا	This worldly life

Du'ā	دعاء	Supplication
Fard	فرض	Obligatory duty
Farā'id	فرائض	Plural of Fard
Fasād	الفساد	Corruption
Fawā'id	فوائد	Benefits
Fitan	الفتن	Trials, temptations, or tribulations
Fitrah	فطرة	Natural disposition
Fiqh	الفقه	Islamic jurisprudence
Firdaws	الفردوس	The highest level of Paradise
Ghayrah	غيرة	Protective jealousy
Ghayb	الغيب	The unseen
Halaqah	حلقة	Study circle
Halāl	الحلال	Permissible
Ḥarām	الحرام	Forbidden
Ḥasanāt	حسنات	Good deeds, righteous actions
Hudaybiyyah	الحديبية	Site of peace a treaty
Ibtilā'āt	الابتلاءات	Trials or tests from Allāh
Iḥsān	الإحسان	Spiritual excellence
Iftiqār	الافتقار	Poverty (neediness)
Ikhlāṣ	الإخلاص	Sincerity
Īmān	الإيمان	Faith
In shā' Allāh	إن شاء الله	If Allāh wills
Iqāmah	إقامة	Second call to prayer
Irjā'	الإرجاء	Belief without action

Iṣbir/Waṣṭabir	اصبر/واصطبر	Be patient/persevere
Isrā'īlīyyāt	إسرائيليات	Narrations from Jewish/Israelite traditions
Istighfār	الاستغفار	Seeking forgiveness
Istiqāmah	الاستقامة	Steadfastness
Izār	إزار	Lower garment or waist-wrap
Jāhil	جاهل	Ignorant person
Jāhilīyyah	الجاهلية	Pre-Islamic period of ignorance
Jihād	الجهاد	Striving in the way of Allāh
Jahannam	جهنم	Hellfire
Jahmīyyah	الجهمية	Followers of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān (early heretical sect)
Jamā'ah	جماعة	Congregation
Jannah	الجنة	Paradise
Juz'	جزء	One-thirtieth of Qur'ān
Kāfir	كافر	Disbeliever
Karāmah	كرامة	Miracle for a righteous believer
Khāliyan	خاليًا	Alone, secluded
Khārijī	خارجي	Rebel who declares major sinners as disbelievers.
Khalīlullāh	خليل الله	The Friend of Allāh (title of Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ)
Khawātir	خواطر	Reflections, Short lessons
Khilāfah	الخلافة	Caliphate
Khudū'	الخضوع	Outer humility or submissiveness

Khuffān	خفّان	Leather socks
Khulʿ	الخلع	Divorce initiated by wife
Khushū	الخشوع	Inner humility in worship
Kuffar	كفار	Plural of Kāfir
Kufr	كفر	Disbelief
Lā ilāha illā Allāh	لا إله إلا الله	There is no deity except Allāh
Maḥabbah	المحبة	Love
Makrūh	المكروه	Disliked act
Maqām	مقام	Station, rank
Munāfiqīn	المنافقين	Hypocrites
Manhaj	منهج	Methodology
Mas'alah	مسألة	Religious issue or topic related to Islamic jurisprudence
Matn	متن	Condensed and summarized foundational Islamic text
Mihrāb	محراب	Secluded prayer niche
Mu'tazilah	المعتزلة	Rationalist theological sect
Mubāh	مباح	Permissible
Mufarridūn	المفردون	Those who isolate themselves in constant Dhikr
Mufassirīn	المفسرون	Qur'ānic exegetes (scholars of Tafsīr)
Muḥāsabah	المحاسبة	Self-accountability
Muḥaqqarāt adh-Dhunūb	محقرات الذنوب	Belittled sins
Muhibbūn	المحِبّون	The lovers (of Allāh)

Muhabbūn	المحَبّون	Those who are loved (by Allāh)
Muhsin	المحسن	Doer of excellence (those with Iḥsān)
Muhsinīn	المحسنين	Plural of Muhsin
Mujaddid	مجدد	Renewer of the faith
Mujāhid	المجاهد	One who strives in Allāh's cause
Mukallaf	مكلّف	A legally accountable individual in Islamic law
Mus'haf	المصحف	Physical copy of Qur'ān
Mushāhadah	مشاهدة	Witnessing
Murāqabah	المراقبة	Mindfulness of Allāh
Mustahabb	مستحب	Recommended
Mutāba'ah	متابعة	Adherence (to the Sunnah)
Mutawakkil	متوكل	One who trusts fully in Allāh
Nafs	النفس	Soul/self
Nafs al-Ammārah	النفس الأمارة	The soul that commands to evil
Nafl	نفل	Voluntary (extra) deed
Nawāfil	النوافل	Voluntary acts of worship
Niʿmah/Ni'am	نعمة	Blessing
Niyyah	نية	Intention
Nūr	نور	Light
Qadā'	قضاء	Allāh's execution or implementation of His will
Qadar	قدر	Divine decree
Qiblah	القبلة	Direction of prayer

Qiyām	قيام	Night prayer
Qunūt	قنوت	Special supplication during prayer
Rak'ah	ركعة	A unit of Salah
Ridhā	رِضى	Contentment, satisfaction, or acceptance
Riyā'	رياء	Showing off
Rizq	رزق	Sustenance, provision
Ṣadaqah	الصدقة	Charity
Sabr	صبر	Patience
Sahābah	الصحابة	Companions of the Prophet ﷺ
Salāh	الصلاة	Prayer
Salāt	الصلات	Plural of Salāh
Salāt al-Istisqā'	صلاة الاستسقاء	Prayer for rain
Salaf	السلف	Early generations of Muslims
Salawāt	صلوات	Prayers and blessings (esp. upon the Prophet ﷺ)
Shafā'ah	شفاعة	Intercession
Shahawāt	الشهوات	Desires
Shayṭān	الشيطان	Satan
Shari'ah	الشريعة	Islamic law
Shirk	الشرك	Polytheism
Shubuhāt	الشبهات	Doubts
Shuhadā'	الشهداء	Martyrs
Siddiqīn	الصديقين	The Truthful

Sirā'an	صراعا	Struggle or clash (with enemies)
Subḥān Allāh	سبحان الله	Glory be to Allāh
Sujūd	السجود	Prostration
Sunnah	السنة	The teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ
Sūrah	سورة	Chapter of the Qur'ān
Suwar	سور	Chapters of the Qur'ān
Tābiʿīn	التابعون	Followers of the Companions
Tālib/Tālibah 'Ilm	طالب/طالبة علم	Seeker of knowledge (Male/Female)
Tadabbur	تدبر	Contemplation
Tahlīl	تهليل	Affirmation of faith; *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*
Tahmīd	تحميد	Praising Allāh; *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh*
Taqwa	التقوى	Piety, righteousness
Tasbīḥ	تسبيح	Glorification of Allah; *Subḥān Allāh*
Taslīm	تسليم	Submission or surrender
Tawakkul	توكل	Trust and reliance in Allāh
Tawbah	توبة	Repentance
Tawāghīt	الطواغيت	False gods/tyrants
Tawfīq	توفيق	Divine enabling
Tawḥīd	التوحيد	Oneness of Allāh
Tazkiyyah	تزكية	Purification
Ṭāghūt	طاغوت	Tyrannical power or false deity

Ṭarghīb	الترغيب	Encouragement
Ṭarhīb	الترهيب	Warning or fear appeal
Ulā' al-Amr	أولي الأمر	People of authority
Uṣūl	أصول	Foundations or principles
Wa al-'ilmu 'inda Allāh	والعلم عند الله	And knowledge is with Allāh
Wa-al-'iyādh billāh	والعياذ بالله	And we seek refuge with Allāh
Wa-Allāhu a'lam	والله أعلم	And Allāh knows best
Wājib	واجب	Obligatory
Walā'	الولاء	Allegiance
Wallāhi	والله	By Allāh (oath)
Wara'	الورع	Pious caution
Wasīlah	وسيلة	Means of seeking nearness (with Allāh)
Wudū'	وضوء	Ablution before prayer
Yaqīn	اليقين	Certainty
Yawm ad-Dīn	يوم الدين	Day of Judgment
Yawm al-Qiyāmah	يوم القيامة	Day of Resurrection
Zāhid	زاهد	Ascetic; one who practices Zuhd
Zakāt	الزكاة	Obligatory almsgiving
Zinā	زنا	Fornication/adultery
Zuhd	الزهد	Asceticism
Zulm	ظلم	Oppression

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ،
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"O Allah, send blessings and peace upon Muhammad and upon his family and all his companions. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds."

May Allah bless and reward our Shaykh for this beneficial series of lectures. We ask Allah to preserve and protect our beloved Shaykh in both Iman and health keep him steadfast upon the Ḥaqq, and elevate his rank to Jannat al-Firdaws.

May Allah place barakah in these efforts, accept these humble attempts from us, and reward everyone involved. May He forgive our mistakes and shortcomings, and allow as many Muslims as possible to benefit from this.

Amīn

تم بحمد الله

Inspired by Shaykh Ahmad Musā Jibrīl's 1446 Ramadān video series on Tazkiyyah, ***Spiritual Purification Retreat*** is an adapted work compiling the series' transcriptions into an organized, cohesive book. In these vivid reflections, this senior Islamic scholar takes us back in time offering glimpses into the hearts and minds of our righteous Salaf and noble scholars of the past.

Rooted firmly in the Qurā'n and Sunnah and conveyed with pristine rhetorical precision, the luminary Shaykh imparts stark reminders passionately and wholeheartedly—reviving the hearts of those spiritually starved, and awakening those lost amidst the crashing waves of this vanishing Dunyā.